
POEMS
^{by}
IRA BILLMAN

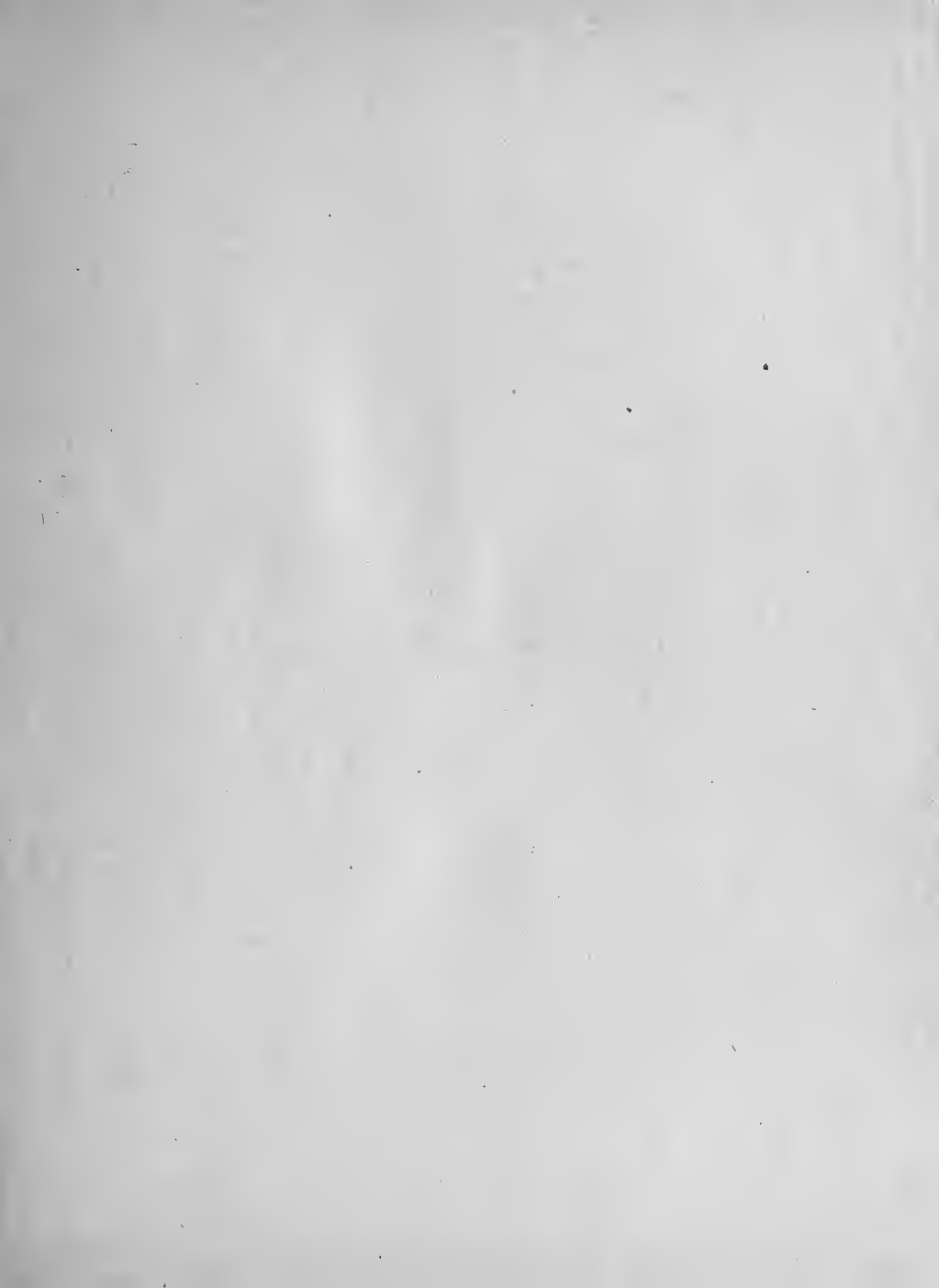
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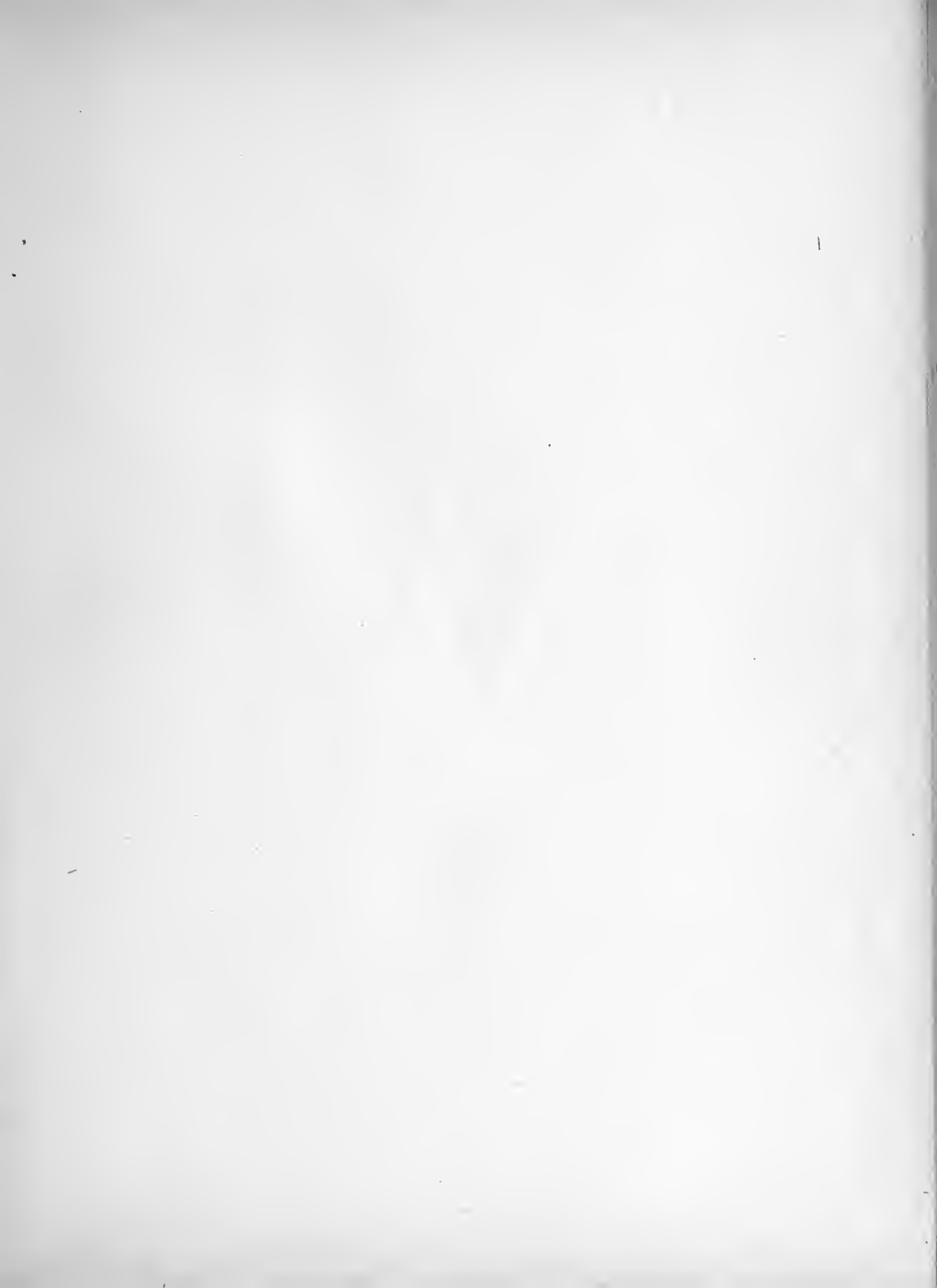
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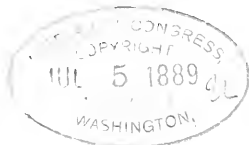


BLUEBIRD NOTES.

POEMS

BY

IRA BILLMAN.



NEW YORK.
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To
Ida Kelsey Billman,
This Volume
Is Affectionately Inscribed,
By Her Husband.
Killingworth, Ct., 1889.

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PREFACE.

NOT half the pleasure it has been to me
These thoughts to body forth, can I now hope
They will afford to any, who may grope
Thro' their oft dark, umbrageous woods, some tree
Of luscious fruit to find. No prophecy
Do I indulge for them ; as that, may mope
Like moulting bird for worms, whose horoscope
E'en augur'd it the world's periphery !
This much of joy ; the book shall me afford
A faithful narrative of steps I've trod,
Along the peaceful river of my God,
Beskirt with starry worlds What I record,
If worthy praise, belongs to Him alone ;
The censure it deserves is all my own.

THE AUTHOR.

Killingworth, Ct., December 13, 1888.

POEMS.

BLUEBIRD NOTES.

As one disenchanted—heart-sore and weary
Thro' many an hour,
I sat in my study, aimless and dreary,
In doubt of my power.

For oft, I had tried impassion'd to sing
The thought fresh and wild,
That sprang from my path on light, dewy wing
When I was a child.

But oft, as the fire-note rose on the air,
That in me had burn'd;
List'ning a moment more pleasing and fair
I heard it return'd.

'Twas only a dream had broken my rest!
A feeling of pain,
Akin to remorse, thus haunted my breast
O'er time spent in vain.

I'll pleased with the thought, my mind thus to free,
I turned to the light;
Just then, fell a bluebird note from the tree,
That bounded my sight.

Its next note was struck by a rocket of song
That burst on the air!
A mocking-bird, perch'd on th' uppermost prong,
Trill'd and whistled there.

All th' witching warble and soft plaintive note
Of forest and glen,
With rich improvise from his sunny throat,
Liv'd over again.

A moment's surprise the bluebird reveal'd,
That another should sing
Its own notes better; then, quickly it wheel'd,
And was off on the wing.

In th' neighboring field, soon it warbled away,
As sweet as could be;
"There's room in the world," it was trying to say,
"For you and for me."

How lonely the fields, were all simple notes
Brush'd out of the sky;
And only song birds tuned their wondrous throats
When passing us by!

Beautiful lesson! tho' others may weave
My note in their song;
The thought that thrills me, not stopping to grieve,
I pass it along.

The sky is so vast, there is need somewhere
For each simple part,
To sprinkle the earth and sweeten the air,
With notes from the heart.

October, 1888.

BLESSING.

MY heart delights itself in blessing,
 Blessing
 Those who pass me in the race ;
 May their steps with tireless pace,
 Mount the heights of starry space,
And all they fondly dream come true,
 Come true.

Where I have fail'd and one succeeds,
 Succeeds,
 There no envy shall intrude,
 To shadow the sunny mood,
 That his work with joy has view'd,
And prays for him lasting acclaim,
 Acclaim.

To those who feel the gift divine,
 Divine,
 Stirring in the poet's lyre,
 Bursting with prophetic fire ;
 May they sing, as they aspire,
The deathless song, that charms to bless,
 To bless.

Since, he who hates and he who loves,
 Who loves,
All are one ; I pray God bless
Everybody, nothing less ;
'Tis the law of righteousness,
In blessing, man alone is blessed,
 Is blessed.

April, 1888.

DUTY AND BEAUTY.

ALL good things forever grow,
Along the path of duty;
And the feet that thither go,
Will always walk in beauty.

UNIVERSAL HARMONY.

THE air of earth is full of melodies,
And every bush and brook alive with song—
Whose simple notes of bird and hum of bees,
Like chapel music heard among the trees,
In broken snatches sound, or soft or strong—
That yet, to one great anthem all belong.

We listen in the spirit's awful hush ;
And lo ! the step of Nature sounds thro' earth
And sky. All things are on the move. The rush
Of atoms, as of mountain streams that gush
From mighty glaciers at their birth,
The soul and system of all music girth.

From Nature's self, sweet Verse first learn'd to move
Its pretty feet, in th' tinkling dance of poesies ;
For so, the patter of the rain-drops prove,
And hum of cycles down the singing groove
Of Time ; and fields of grass, on whose sweet keys,
So deftly plays the lady finger'd breeze.

The tides of ocean roll, and trade-winds blow,
By rhythmic rule. The heart of man or beast,
As waves of light or heat, play to and fro,
With measur'd stroke. The seasons come and go,
At strophic intervals. And not the least,
The sun, that knows his coming from the East.

E'en storms and earthquakes, that so lawless seem ;
As fell disease, with well marked periodicity
Recur ; and death of worlds, that endless stream
Into the sun, to be diffus'd in steam,
And aggregate again in worlds—to me
'Tis clear, that rhythm fills immensity !

Thus, to and fro, for and against, all things
But stand in due proportion. Rhythm appears
Where counter forces meet. Such are the wings
That speed the earth, and every star, that sings
About its orbit. So, have we no fears,
As good and evil wrestle thro' the years.

The fret, the sting, the thwart, the utter no
Of death to man's requests, result in rhythm—
The rhythm of moral conduct here below—
Of patience sweet, and such a holy glow
Of love, as when from clouds upon a prism,
The sun doth burst in rich baptismal chrism.

Thus, far beneath the surface whirl, we note
The busy shuttle of the loom, that weaves
A wondrous pattern in the seamless coat
Of God ! The interplays of good and ill promote
The rhythmic workings of His will, that relieves,
As light and shade, the picture God conceives !

November, 1888.

THE FULNESS OF TIME.

ALL things their seasons have. For clover bloom,
We search the winter fields and woods in vain ;
But, when the summer months have come again,
The airs are laden with its sweet perfume.
Nor herb alone, but e'en the horse we groom,
And bird and creeping thing of every strain,
Hath time to mate and drop its young. So plain
It is, the thought we find, is from the womb
Of Time new-born. But yesterday, and men
Explor'd the field with torches, on their knees !
To-day, and 'neath the academic trees,
A hundred eyes at once, its presence ken ;
The very air is with its note a-hum,
Now, that the fulness of its time has come.
October, 1888.

THE HUMMING BIRD.

So small and fair ;
A sun-dyed dewdrop born with wings,
'Neath Salvia's coral cup it swings,
And to the winded flower clings
As if grown there.

So neat and fair ;
An artist's dream of loveliness.
Its form charms thro' a gauze-like dress
Of rapid wings, that one might guess
Was spun of air.

So wise and fair ;
A poet's thought, forever sunny ;
It drinks from out each cup of honey,
With too much joy for making money,
To purchase care.

So true and fair ;
Each change without effects its coat ;
A fire-bell blazes on its throat ;
Yet still, it chirps the one sweet note
Thro' all the air.

THE HUMMING BIRD.

So sweet and fair;
Its mellow hum hath magic powers,
To wake to life dead summer hours—
Memories fresh as fragrant flowers,
For winter's fare.

November, 1887.

BRAIN BLOOM.

THERE is no plant that blooms
On earth, but hath some root
In Heav'n. The wavy plumes
Of grass, thro' which upshoot
The lily's crown, or star
Of daisy, all spring forth
From seed ; some, brought afar
By birds from out the North,
Or vagrant winds that blow
All wheres ; dropp'd in the earth
But some brief months ago,
Or at Creation's birth.

Nor meadows seeded down,
By flight of passing Time ;
Or gardens of renown,
Where man from every clime
Implants the choicest seed,
Doth yet spring up to sight,
Until some higher need
The sky afford. The light
Of sun, and April rain,
And summer dew, must blend,
To germinate the grain,
That flowers in the end.

So is the human brain,
But soil. All growth therein,
Is from some mental grain,
That ages past has been
Imbedded 'mid the slough
Of rippling currents down
The veins of Time, till now
Unseen. A smile, a frown,
Borne lightly on the air
From gardens far away,
Is germinal; and there,
Awaits the touch of May.

At last, the summer skies,
Each slumb'ring seed reveals;
And to our oft surprise,
The trace of some conceals.
Of this and that, we know;
And whence the seed was brought;
But still, we search below,
In vain; new strains of thought
Remain; and we opine,
An angel, passing by,
Hath dropp'd a seed divine—
And thus, we reason why!

Their petals are afret,
E'en with the golden light
Of suns that never set!
Then, what, if 'neath our sight,

The germs of art do bloom,
In temples of renown;
And shed their rich perfume,
In pictures thro' the town;
And science, lit'rature,
Religion, all the seven—
Of this, we still are sure,
All have some root in Heaven!

November, 1888.

ETERNAL PROGRESS.

FROM Alpine heights where dwells eternal snow ;
As eagles mount to meet the coming light,
My venturous thought, from wheeling to and fro
In broad'ning circles, takes its upward flight,
As high as dream can soar, or fancy breathe ;
Till bursts upon my view the long look'd day,
When ancient war its rusted sword shall sheathe,
And its drum beat step to man's higher way !
For the thread winds in and the thread winds out,
As slowly upward the spiral doth run ;
Thus ever the world in turning about,
Ascends to the right and new heights are won.

I mark the pathway of the changing world,
As forward, backward, oft its course appears ;
And see therein, its secret wide unfurl'd—
The winding circle of the growing years.
From out the mould of th' past the present grows ;
All things to th' last, continue from the first.
The summer roses bloom from winter snows ;
Regression itself, is progress but revers'd.
For the thread winds in and the thread winds out,
As slowly upward the spiral doth run ;
Thus ever the world in turning about,
Ascends to the right and new heights are won.

The good is infinite ; God is its strength ;
While evil, strong, is finite at the most,
And sure as fate it shall be foiled at length ;
No force can stand against such powerful host.
Thus possible good some day shall all be real,
And real evil shall some day expire.
Oh ! doubt it not, as tow'rd the true ideal,
The world is ever mounting high'r and high'r !
For the thread winds in and the thread winds out,
As slowly upward the spiral doth run ;
Thus ever the world in turning about,
Ascends to the right and new heights are won.

The world is moving on, howe'er it seem ;
For look at th' past, and what dun clouds of gloom
Have flown away, as flies a nightmare dream,
With crimes of horrid shape and black as doom ;
Thus, every cycle marks man's steady gain !
And what is dark to-day is light to-morrow,
As the slow years wind upward still amain,
And from the future all new beauty borrow.
For the thread winds in and the thread winds out,
As slowly upward the spiral doth run ;
Thus ever the world in turning about,
Ascends to the right and new heights are won.

Dost grow impatient, that it creeps so slow ?
The distances are great ; let none be rash.
On heaven's skirts a pinion'd star doth glow,
That near, would shoot us by like th' lightning's flash !

So, the days will come by sages long discuss'd
When is fulfill'd the time, as prophets read ;
And th' world will spin along thro' clouds of dust,
The wheels of progress all a-smoke with speed!
For the thread winds in and the thread winds out,
As slowly upward the spiral doth run ;
Thus ever the world in turning about,
Ascends to the right and new heights are won.

All things renew, in life's great Phoenix fire!
The Spirit of Time springs up afresh from the sod,
Thus ever and forever the world mounts high'r ;
Its helix trend, as high as th' height of its God !
And never, no never, can it reach the goal,
Or pause at th' close of an unending day ;
But onward, upward still, as th' flight of a soul,
Eternal Progress shall hold on its way.
For the thread winds in and the thread winds out,
As slowly upward the spiral doth run ;
Thus ever the world in turning about,
Ascends to the right and new heights are won.

1886.

CHRIST.

A FAMOUS artist, fashion'd long ago,
A simple rose so fair, nor great nor small,
But said: "I find in it no fault at all!"
Its every form, and tint, and scent, and blow,
Were such; great artists, since, have sought to show
Their worth, by holding all their mind in thrall
To that one masterpiece! So, scorn to call
By other names, the charms that in it glow.
Thus, long ago, a being trod our earth,
Who lived a simple, human life complete;
In thought, and word, and action, all so sweet,
That e'en, the ages since, have given birth
To no new grace; and all, that life, who scan,
Must own, what's more, is less a perfect man!

December 1888.

ETERNAL MELODIES.

FAR, far above the warning clouds,
There is a point, where earth's discords—
The grating sounds of jarring crowds,
Are lost in heavens of melody.

There sweet voiced choirs attend the moving stars,
When mellow dusk falls on the world;
And oft is heard their dulcet bars,
In rosy morn and dewy eve.

In that fair realm all songs abide,
E'er since the sky was domed o'erhead;
And evermore, as swallows glide
On viewless wings o'er azure fields.

On highest mount, by listening seer,
Where thunders foal and splendors breed;
His hair on end with holy fear,
Alone is heard the deathless song.

There sang of old the song he sings,
That seems so new in human ears;
The sylvan bell he sweetly rings,
Eternal years has rung before.

He writes the song alive to all,
Who hears aright such melody.
It cannot die, whate'er befall,
Since transcript true to life itself.

Nor word, nor work, that men essay,
But silent drops, forgotten soon ;
That touches not, in rhythmic way,
These same eternal melodies.

1887

THE MUSICAL MOUNTAIN.

THERE is a mountain of visions and dreams,
Where oft I escape from the dusty street,
To lave in its fonts my world-weary feet,
And list to the lute of its woodland streams.

There, under the trees where the daisies spring,
And each tiny stream rings a sylvan bell,
Filling the mountain with a magic spell,
I hear the wild notes of the songs I sing.

Ah, no! not my own are the songs I sing,
But given to me as a holy trust;
Their garments as pure as the robes of the just,
Who pity and peace to the erring bring.

Far up in that mountain alone I've heard,
Songlets as untold as the countless leaves
Brown autumn now shakes from the leafy trees,
To perish for want of the wing of a word.

My work thus shall end, as others before,
Still haunted by thoughts afresh from the skies,
Thronging the mountain with tears in their eyes,
And begging to earth, a verse for a door!

And still, there are heights commanding the sky,
That ibex and eagle only have seen ;
Wild lakes, that echo from their virgin sheen,
The song of the swan floating down to die.

What peaks of poesy, none ever have scal'd !
Too lofty as yet, for the feet of the strong,
That all must some day surrender to song.
Ah, me ! how the thought hath my spirit regal'd.

A child of the skies ! with infinite dower,
Still upward I mount with hope in my breast,
A light-beam aglow with Heaven's behest,
Where songs still unsung wait man's growing power !
1886.

THE COMING OF THE GREAT.

THE earth is strewn with pearls of more than Orient flame,
No man among us, yet, has rightly learned to name.
Strange thoughts of fairest plumage flit thro' all the sky,
With none of skillful aim to wing them as they fly.

Such are the movements, that betoken a reform ;
Like gentle murmurs, running on before a storm.
Where moral effort works great wrong into a rage,
A man is made to mould the greatness of his age.

To guide the forces that encamp from shore to shore,
He must be tall enough to see the country o'er ;
As gentle as a child, but strong in moral hate
To hurl the money changers from tillers of the state.

Expectancy awaits the coming of his feet,
And common hope doth scan each stranger on the street.
To voice the eager thought, of late there came a seer,
Of spirit wondrous sweet, our annals name Lanier.

And what shall be the coming, of such a King of men ?
Shall our Messiah, still, have need for sword or pen ?
E'en Nature prophesies by many faithful hints,
The coming of the spring, in all her gentle tints.

O'er Freedom's sunny land, the air is full of song,
And woodlands far and near, most wondrous notes prolong ;
Rich sonnets echo wild, along each rocky shore,
Snatches of sweeter strains, than ever heard before.

So, closely now I listen to poets far and near,
That e'en no faintest twitter may escape my ear ;
To catch the accents of Eternal Melody,
That shall inform the verse of th' poet soon to be.

And when, I lie at his feet, thro' all the golden day,
He will read me aright in things I cannot say ;
And train the poet's joy of earth and skies divine,
To flow thro' all my spirit with the cheer of newest wine.

How grave is the mistake ! so blind is still our race
To worth above us, he may die in deep disgrace !
The critics all, condemning good they fail to see ;
While he bequeathes his fame to long futurity !

In such a painful guise, o'er shadowed e'en with hate,
Thro' causes that insure the coming of the great ;
He may be so unlike the being that we plan,
That we shall lend our aid, to put him under ban !

September, 1881.

UNCHANGED.

OfT, homeward nearing,
A sweet bird,
From window peering,
I have heard ;
Cheerily humming,
" Papa is coming."

And oft, to the street
It would fly,
My coming to meet,
Soon as nigh ;
Merrily humming,
" Papa is coming."

But days came flying
O'er my head ;
My child lay dying,
When it said,
Beyond the humming,
" Papa is coming."

And now from the skies
Oft I hear,
As the daylight dies,
Soft and clear,
That voice still humming,
" Papa is coming."

GOLDEN ROD.

AMONG the flowers, a true Olympian Jove,
'Mid hills and woods enthroned ; with stately nod,
It shakes its golden locks ; and like a god,
It everywhere doth haunt the purling cove,
And fitly speaks its speech in shining gold.
Despite the mystery ; who lists intent,
May hear the mighty word "Encouragement,"
In still, small voice, as God e'en spake of old.
So, flitting here and there among the flowers—
The lily fair of France, and England's rose,
And tasting of each cup like honey bee ;
My muse, Columbia's flower would propose,
And to the great Goddess of Liberty ;
Doth christen now, the golden rod, as ours.

October, 1888.

INSPIRATION.

POETS of old invoked the muse,
Their torpid rhymes to fuse;
Nor was it all an idle form,
Some languid line to warm;
Thus, the inspir'd are always known;
Their work is not their own.

'Tis hot impulse that melts the ore
Of common thought in store;
Illumination fired by love,
Doth lift the soul above
Itself, to do the deed imprest,
Beyond its level best.

Such pow'r there is, that man must feel
Where he is wont to kneel;
And lo! in heavens all its own,
Unutterable things are shown.
E'en common worlds, it makes anew,
And floods with morning hue.

Oh! never was this tide confin'd
To any chosen mind.
A fountain sweet, thro' time and space,
It flows in every race;
A spirit fair, that fields impart
Above the rules of art.

Thus every one, it doth inspire,
Whose nature is a lyre ;
Whose nerves, so tense and delicate,
The passing winds vibrate ;
And sensitive, thro' fibre fine,
To touch of the divine.

To such a man, the juicy lips
Of winter fruit he sips,
Hath magic charm ; and all aglow,
He sees the orchard blow ;
He hears the fall of summer rain,
And robins sing again.

Nor things alone, but persons, too,
Distil the heavenly dew.
Some twenty men his thoughts inspire
As steel from flint strikes fire.
Thus, ne'er a Bacon walks the porch
But lights a Shakespeare's torch.

All higher skill to paint a rose,
From inspiration flows.
Such wind of God doth smite a man,
And lo ! a Vatican.
Thus, each his work will better do,
Keeping great ends in view.

It pulses in the hero's blood,
'Neath flashing sword and stud ;

And up he mounts, to do and dare,
As one who walks on air ;
And tyrant wrong is hurl'd aground,
Till hills and vales resound.

It breathes new life in Christian creed,
And prompts the living deed.
It freshens all the pilgrim's way,
The Book and holy day ;
And consecrates all place and time,
To work and thought sublime !

April, 1888.

THE INFINITE.

IN the weed's plain face,
A resemblance one may trace,
In the lips or in the eye,
That betrays its kinship with the sky!

The meanest thing we seek to know,
Doth lead us on by streams that flow
Beyond the sky, where rolls the sea
Of fathomless infinity!

The Phœbe bird with pensive call,
If I would know it all in all,
The round of science I must turn,
Of every school its lesson learn;
For in my little feather'd friend,
All lines of thought and knowledge blend.

The sun that wheels his wonted course,
And winds that fly like mettled horse,
Haste in from every source
All cosmic force,
To shape the egg, and hatch the bird;
And, when its chirp is heard,

The mother breast of earth is stirred,
Soil, air, and sea, to gird ;
And all things else below,
Are made some labor to bestow,
Her little one, that doth not sow,
To furnish food, and make it grow.

The little bird among the flowers,
Warbling away the summer hours,
A center is, of all the powers
That nature dowers.

Thus, every question we pursue,
Doth bring the absolute to view ;
And opens wide as fenceless lea,
The doorway of immensity ;
A ray of light,
On its earthward flight,
Such questions drifts in sight,
As science owns are very odd,
And brings us face to face with God.

And so, the thing may little be
That here unfolds itself to me ;
But still, it doth reveal
God's power, Creation's seal—
His finger prints of mystery ;
The symbol of infinity.

1887.

GOD'S NOBILITY.

THE man who wipes the tear from sorrow's eye,
The fever'd lip bedews; binds up the sore
And broken heart; upon the rocky shore
A beacon lights; a star puts in the sky
Of some dark life; makes two grass blades to grow
Where one had grown before; unmasks the wrong
That virtue feigns; and is a thousand strong
For mercy, truth, when justice seems so slow;
And thus, adds beauty's bloom, a charm divine,
The song of bird, the hum of honey-bee,
The fragrance of sweet spring, like cheer of wine,
To bless another's lot: or bond, or free,
A rag upon his back, or linen fine,
Still, he is one of God's nobility.

September, 1888.

ULTIMA THULE.

THE world is not used up. No utmost bounds
Of progress have been reached. The higher rounds
Of excellence await the coming feet
Of millions yet unborn. The ages fleet
Can ne'er o'ertake the chariot wheels of God,
Nor yet exhaust His bounty. He is odd,
Not we, who sets a limit to the unexplor'd,
And then, such boundary line, with pen or sword
Defends.

How like the ancient mariners!
Who sighted land, with everlasting fire
O'ergrown, beyond the point where seaman's keel
As yet, had struck; and thereupon, with zeal
For God and native land, not of the truth,
They drew a line across the map; forsooth,
Declaring sagely, here the earth doth end;
And named the isle, their title to defend,
Ultima Thule.

By and by 'twas found,
As all things thrust from sight at length come round,
That in the line of their exploring sloop,
There lay ahead the mighty Shetland group,
With Norway, and remoter lands, that roll
In continental vastness to the Pole!

Soon, too, 'twas known in irony of all
Their thoughts, the earth is fashion'd like a ball,
And with its sister stars was meant to be
The alphabet of God's infinity.

In vain, alarmists cry, that all beyond
A certain point is death ! So men despond
Of church, or state, whose pathway seems to lie
Direct into some desert waste, hard by,
Of ruin and grim nothingness ; instead,
New streams gush forth, from hidden oceans fed.
And they must strike their bounds, and move them on,
Like robber tents, before advancing dawn.

They yet are living who remember well
The sperm-oil lamp, and of its mission tell
Aladdin tales. Peace to its gentle shades !
For still its charm, o'er midnight toil, invades
The poet's world. What tho' its light was dim,
And oft inconstant, like a lover's whim,
It made it seem the more bewitching sweet.
And when some travell'd stranger would repeat
The story, round the great old-fashioned fires,
Of how whale fishing soon must cease ; our sires
In pity, then, would speak of coming time,
And praise the age of sperm-oil as sublime !

Of things that soon should come to pass, their mind
Was darker than the darkness they opin'd
Must fall upon our cheerless winter night.
Before the lamp had gone, came candle light ;

And in due time, coal-gas and kerosene.
Instead of failing shoals and herds, 'twas seen
The very bowels of the earth do yield
A large supply. Its rocks respond, unseal'd
At length by *sesame* of man, and flow
In rivers of illumination! So
Abundantly supplied, the fruitful years
To light man's gloom, and to relieve his fears.

And still, the end has not been reached. Along
Comes the Electric Light, to frighten wrong
From alleys foul with night and crime, as gray
As Time, and turn their darkness into day.
And when the hour of need has fully come,
As onward still the wheels of progress hum,
A taller race, their lamps e'en at the sun
Shall light; and talk in pity of the one
Confus'd by feeble rays, that thought to gauge
God's plans by light of so benighted age.

'Tis thus, a truth we read between the lines,
Of those who write to mourn the forest pines
Decay'd; that sows with stars, the blackest cope
Of heaven, and flashes like a larger hope!
E'en now, as men have come to know the law,
The best of wooden wares are made of straw;
And walnut trees, they find of largest size;
And soon, such other trees, as most they prize;
Rosewood and ebony of finest grain,
All grown immortal in the human brain!

And so, man's need shall work the blessed day,
Of full deliverance to yon forests gray ;
And he will fall beneath the same red ban,
Who fells a tree, as he who kills a man.
For, as the good of all the race we name,
Without relief, results would be the same !
So shall the trees, those ancient sons of God,
Lock their great boughs above the floral sod—
Above the shady fount, and fertile stream,
In immemorial groves. O, bright fore-gleam !
Of days when men shall dwell secure in homes
Imperishable ; and from their age-old domes
Look back, and pity their ill-favored sires,
Who lived 'mid Boston and Columbia fires !

E'en thus, were iron ore to fail, 'twould prove
A blessing, not a curse ; as from the groove
Of common place the world would bound, nor feel
Its need, skimming along on paper wheel ;
Or, day of no more coal, that's coming fast ;
O blessed, sunny day ! for then, at last,
Earth's densely peopled towns shall all be heal'd
And cleansed of soot and filth, and, like the field,
Drink in sunshine ! while other motive powers,
Shall wing and warm its happy, golden hours.
But hitch Niagara to our industries,
And wheel and spindle, like the busy bees,
Would hum the continent ; and yet, abide
Untold, swift mountain stream, and ocean tide,

To spur man on to future growth and hope.
We are not left to chance of single rope,
Like hapless seaman, to escape a grave
Dread, fathomless and lone ! Above us wave
The hand of God, and star embattled skies,
That never yet were taken by surprise !

In many things, by ages long conceal'd,
Fast as man's widening wisdom has reveal'd,
We see some plain provision, that was made
For future growth, when the Creator laid
The pillars of the world ! Thus, from the mine's
Deep mouth, Niagara thunders thro' the pines
Afar ; 'tis said by Him, who doth the sparrows feed,
Your Heavenly Father knoweth, that you need
These things.

The thought doth speed us like a gale !
Whatever element from earth may fail ;
Were all its fruitful land to utmost bound
Possess'd ; nay, were the earth itself, or drown'd,
Or burned to death ; the reason were sublime !
For then, has come the fulness of the time,
When man can better get along without
Its heavy charge ; and by some fairer route,
Must thence ascend his being's higher plane.
As old things lose, there is alone new gain.
Amid the crumbling ruins of all times,
Where least suspect ; the angel Progress climbs

To ripeness on the harvest hours, and sheds
Their luscious fruit upon the upturn'd heads
Of nations. Act reposes upon act,
And strata are on strata pil'd, and pack'd ;
Still, long as their gray fossils thus have dream'd,
Amid the solemn silences, hath gleam'd
A sunny, upward thought, along the line
Of one far purpose, lofty and divine !

The martial forces moving everywhere
About us, have a meaning far more fair,
Than e'en the progress of the thought they mark,
Upon earth's milestones, as they pass. For, hark !
And you will hear therein the prophecy
Of endless growth, in man's ability
To master th' mystery of infinitude ;
And from God's presence, in his graver mood,
Receive still growing light upon the page
Of Revelation. Thus, from age to age,
The hum of progress grows, until it breaks
In mighty hallelujah chorus, that awakes
Ecstatic joy, above decaying mine,
Evanishing wood, and perishing idol !

Thine,

Ultima Thule ! is a word of hope,
Unbounded as the azure fields, that slope
Away beyond the hills of dreaming youth.
No matter what a chaos of the truth
Prevails to-day ; to-morrow it will take
On shape, the next day into being wake,

And then, perfection ! With sublimest trend,
All things to happiness and heaven tend
O'er mountains of debate; and tho' the way
For light and love were hedg'd about to-day,
To-morrow morn, a path would there be made,
And ere the evening sun, a track be laid,
And heavy trains of cars go thundering by,
With lightning speed, into the Future's eye,
Whose distance now, and dimness make it seem
Impossible !

True to childhood's sunny dream,
We need not fear results. We near no wall
Of death, in time or space, that must end all.
The trend of things is to the side of right,
And soon, will merge from darkness into light.
The forces that in nature work thro' cold
And heat, persist in never growing old.
The rose, as freshly blooms on earth to-day,
As when it shed perfume upon the way
Of Him, who trode the steeps of Calvary,
To lead man's higher way.

Eternity

And God are without bounds. The means of grace,
The laws of life, the rules of art, no trace
Reveal of hoary years. And love, as young
As when in earliest days of man 'twas sung,
Still watches o'er the cradle, by the grave
Still weeps, and dies its country still to save ;

And music walks the earth, still fresh with bars,
That time the orbits of th' eternal stars !

Encompass'd by infinitude—since God
Is infinite, in whom all things that plod
Or fly consist—we know among the mass,
Great things must always shortly come to pass !
The eager ages crowd the seas, with new
Exploring ships of thought. Thick as the dew
Of morn, fresh worlds hang on the skirts of God,
Awaiting man's discovery ; and odd
As it may seem, man's universe doth grow,
With growing man ; and when the present show
Has passed away, the future shall remain,
From all its loss, still richer in the gain
Of truth and love, as we go sounding on,
O'er boundless seas to an eternal dawn !

To mend our fortunes and enrich the race,
As thus, the footsteps of our God we trace,
Is the sublimest privilege of man,
In quiet home, or thund'ring Vatican !

November, 1888.

EMPTINESS.

THE less cannot the greater fill.

E'en ageless Amazon doth pour
Into vast Ocean's cup, and still,
Its waves with hunger fret and roar.

The floods of pleasure amply fed,
By streams that flow with limpid art,
From Andes' ponderous water-shed,
No more suffice a human heart!

What rivers gush from earthly springs!
From titled wealth, and play-house love,
And wine, that Lesbian poet sings,
So like a lyrist from above!

And yet, were all their fulness mass'd,
And thro' a single spirit pour'd ;
It still would sit, when day was pass'd,
And muse upon its empty board.

For empty hours will surely come,
When no song bird is in the trees ;
Nor yet, the soft, melodious hum,
Of sweet, industrious honey-bees.

And then, unless the mind itself
Be filled with birds, who songs shall bless,
All life will seem like cankered pelf;
But emptiness, and emptiness !

Such birds are winged from former days
Alone ; of use and beauty born ;
And pour forth songs, whose matin lays
Wake in the soul perpetual morn.

A sorrow is upon the sea,
Whose empty sigh is always give ;
And man, more vast, will restless be,
Till taught for others good to live.

January 1889.

TENDENCY.

BENEATH the surface whirl of men and things,
Whose rash, conflicting steps to madness tend,
There is a tide, that from creation springs,
Resistless in the end.

Exploring Arctic zones, a struggling band
Oft finds, on marching north for many a day,
A great ice-floe has swept them south, from land
Some hundred miles away !

A man may turn his back upon the East,
And westward fly with all imagin'd speed ;
World movements still, in ways he dreams of least,
His path will sunward lead.

And so, the mighty sweep of tendency
Doth gather up into itself the tides
Of life's adverse world-streams, from sea to sea,
And o'er all barriers glides.

The trend of things is on the side of right ;
And man hath need to look before he leaps.
Who sides with wrong is buried out of sight,
In dread abysmal deeps !

Who sides with right, has Earth, with all her powers,
To work for him, and Heaven hath pledg'd success.
In vain do men oppose ; the golden hours
His fields with harvests bless.

April, 1888.

DUTIES.

ONE race of birds, unlike the rest,
With matchless form and voice to sing,
And ample art to build a nest,
Most strange! was made without a wing.

But stranger still, another day,
In lands remote, great wings were made,
By angels brought, one dewy May,
And on their backs as burdens laid.

At first the load was ill at rest,
But grew, by use, e'en fast and light;
Thus, what they bore at God's behest,
Bore them in turn thro' realms of light.

April, 1887.

MOUNTAINS.

O'ER the plain where glides the plow,
The mountains far repose ;
While the heaven's grandly bow
With a star-encircled brow,
To weave their mantle of eternal snows.

Nature's emblem of the great,
They front the years and weather ;
Still content, reward to wait,
Ne'er complaining at the fate
That links on earth, the high and low together.

Always working with their might,
They feed the plains below ;
Never resting day or night,
With their souls aflood with light ;
Their labor song the brooklet's silver flow.

Would'st fulfil thy Heav'n behest,
Tho' warred upon unceasing?
Like the mountains ever bless'd,
Without murmur, without rest,
Give thyself to other's good increasing.

1886.

THE RIVER.

FAR up in the clouds,
Where darkness enshrouds
The deep-crevic'd rock,
With its snowy frock ;
The infant river leaps into day,
And whirling, twisting, speeds on its way.

The tall, mountain giant
May frown all defiant ;
Grim, intricate hill
Look gloomy and chill ;
Yet, nothing frightened, it takes its way,
Warbling sweet snatches of an ancient lay.

Thro' fir-tangled wood
Where wolves prowl for food,
And forests of gloom
As trackless as doom,
The knowing river still finds its way,
And never blindly doth go astray.

Where broad lowlands lie,
It sleeps by and by,
And dreams pretty dreams,
The shadowy beams

Of earth and sky in quaint interplay ;
But wakes before long, and can't delay.

With many a sweep
Thro' pastures of sheep,
Where populous town
Its margin crowds down,
It runs to th' ocean forever and aye,
A hand, invisible, guiding the way.

As God, the giver,
Thus guides the river,
From mountain to sea ;
Sure He will lead me,
If ever busy by night and day,
Just like the river, I cut my way.

December, 1887.

LIFE'S GREAT OVERFLOW.

NOT mournful nights and joyless days,
Is man's appointed lot below;
But so to walk in wisdom's ways,
The cup of life will overflow.

Where e'er we turn our cheerful eyes,
Beyond the pale of sordid use,
Some Eden fair of pleasure lies,
Whose beauty is its own excuse.

Things good for food are toothsome, too,
A margin, rich in clearest gain.
The globing of the summer dew
Both feeds and tints the growing grain.

Thus, every sense a mission serves,
Man's workday life with charms to wreath.
How dull our lot, did human nerves
Aid us alone to move and breathe.

Ah me! the thought my being stirs;
The living streams, that bless us so,
Gush from the feet of mountain firs,
In everlasting overflow!

He who, ere time, my pleasure thought,
Which thence, in his sweet bosom lay
A thing of beauty, lately wrought,
Must suffer when I go astray!

November, 1888.

COMPENSATION.

OR soon or late, we get but what we give;
As we relinquish life, we only live.

'Tis nature's law, that binds all worlds in one;
Each thread from action and reaction spun.

So, men have learn'd the noble horse to breed;
All gain in power, is at the cost of speed.

To birds, that sport in plumage matchless fair,
Has been denied the brown coat's mellow air.

The wealth of tropic zones, to languor leads;
While barren soil, nor chills nor tigers breeds.

In breadth of culture, greatest depth is lost;
Each gain of wit is still at wisdom's cost.

The poet oft, to make his meaning plain,
Must carve away some florid word with pain.

To cottager, how fine a palace seems;
While its rich lord, of his sweet quiet dreams.

No man can have the whole. When friends must go,
Our angels come, in garments white as snow.

For things denied, that common are to men,
In other days, a larger good I ken.

Still, men forget, in search of wealth and fame,
The sweet, without the bitter, never came.

Who learns to thank his faults, or serf or earl,
Like wounded oyster, mends his shell with pearl.

Each pain doth bear in anguish, something sweet;
And out of loss, comes gain with snowy feet.

A life of virtue puts the world in debt;
And God will see the payment shall be met.

The longer 'tis withheld, it larger grows;
As grain, some hundred fold, from seed one sows.

Thus, life in after years, like echoing hill,
Gives back the word we speak, repeated still.

Full measure, shaken down, shall all return,
To make or mar, the future that we earn.

THERE IS NO FORGETTING

No busy thought, in life's throng'd way,
Is ever lost from memory.
The stars, tho' veiled with light by day,
Shine on and on eternally.

The foot of bird imprints the sand,
That's buried 'neath a million years,
Till quarries wake in temples grand;
When lo! in rock, it reappears.

A graceful fern trips in the mire;
And o'er its grave dread ages roll,
Ere man appears in quest of fire,
And finds its print upon the coal.

So, every thought doth leave behind
Some secret mark; some sign doth trace,
What tho' conceal'd deep in the mind,
Nor time, nor death, can e'er efface.

Still, memory here, a pensive Ruth,
In after years of loss and pain,
Goes gleaning in the fields of youth,
Content to find some scatter'd grain.

So many things intrude to pale
The secret sign of conscious light!
And yet, some chance may rend the veil,
As whelms the drowning man with sight.

And thus, we write the Book of Life,
From which our Judgment shall be read.
Each idle word, each silly strife,
Shall shame us still, among the dead.

And so, the word in kindness spoken,
Or harsh one, smother'd in our breath,
Will each, still yield some secret token,
For sweet remembrance after death.

1887.

WILHELMINA.

NEAR by the loveliest city in the South,
Just where a charming street seem'd lost to sight
'Mid clouds of leafy trees, and fresh green hills,
Lay Courtney Place. Its master own'd beside,
A large estate ; where toiled a hundred slaves,
In snowy cotton fields by day, and sang
The old plantation songs, round cabin doors,
By night.

His only child a daughter was,
And Wilhelmina named ; a child that came
To him in the first year of married life ;
The mother's image on her bridal day ;
And so, a child of love, as fair as morn,
And full of sunny ways ; whose airy form,
With cheerful note, flitted like summer birds
Among the trees, thro' all her happy youth.

Her nurse, a color'd woman, when a child,
Was by a slaver brought from Mozambique ;
And in her veins was said to flow the blood
Of kings, a line of warrior chieftains bold,
From immemorial times. As black as night ;
There was the hint of queenly grace in all
Her movements, that the night displays, when robed

With its tiara of stars. With her to sing,
Was Nature's gift, as to the mocking bird
Among the orange trees. Her voice was key'd,
As low and soft as summer evening breeze;
Yet rose, betimes, in awful pitch, that broke
Upon the ear, like distant avalanche
Adown a mountain side. The space between,
Was filled with wild and plaintive tones, that seem'd
The sobbing spirit of the mighty wrongs
Of her nativity, trailed by the hair
Across the seas!

For her color'd mamma,
Thus, Wilhelmina form'd a feeling kin
To veneration; oft, would sit for hours,
To hear her sing. 'Twas she, that gave her first
The happy thought; that he must listen close
To Nature's voice—its birds, and brooks, and brakes—
Who would still learn, to reach the heart with song.

Her mother, like an older sister was;
And they together always went alone.
And thus, she came to womanhood most fair;
When lovers, like a swarm of bees, that scent
The clover's honey cups afar, were drawn
About her wheresoe'er she moved.

By chance;—
For who, as yet, has found the law of love?
On one of those great rounded days of June,
That shine upon the bosom of the year

As turquois; mounted on her blooded horse,
For speed and beauty, noted far and near;
She skimm'd across the fields, as swallows do;
Nor slacken'd pace, until she reach'd a grove,
In which there lay a well-known bridle path;
Fast by a shaded stream it miles and miles
Kept company. It needed but a word,
So well the horse his rider understood,
To make him drop into a swinging gait
Well suited to the dreamy mood she felt.
As oft, before, she slowly rode along,
And drank into the fulness of the joy,
That flow'd about her, on that afternoon;
Now, listening to the saucy chip-munk scold,
Then, to the wood-thrush singing to its mate.
Oft, too, she stoop'd to stroke the wavy mane
Of her well-knowing horse, inclined to shy
At some new sound, and speak assurance, when,
Around a sudden bend, too near to fly!
She saw a well-known form approach; Lagrange,
Tryonne Lagrange, the princely merchant's son.

Their horses stopp'd just as he raised his hat,
And left them, for a moment, face to face.
'Twas but a moment ere they pass'd along,
But in that moment, swift as feather'd thought,
The fateful lightning leapt from heart to heart,
That melted them that instant into one.

Still, Wilhelmina strove the broken thread
Of interest to find in Nature's charms ;
She only saw a face, a noble face,
Whose every feature smote her vision, like
A star. With ebon locks, and eyes as blue,
And deep, as the divinest skies ; his face
E'en haunted her, like planets of some strange,
Unknown, new heaven seen, whose path thro' space
She would, but dared not, question and explore.

And he—what does a man, with heart afire,
But wait, impatient, for the happy hour
Of meeting ? Long before the tardy sun
Had set, Tryonne Lagrange was on his way
To Courtney Place ; and when the moon's soft light
At last streamed in along the stately hall,
They met. A moment hand in hand they stood ;
And then, their lips touch'd in a first, sweet kiss.
For young Lagrange had earned an honest fame
In all that country round. And so, well-pleas'd,
Fair Wilhelmina's father welcomed him ;
And oft he voic'd the praise of his young friend.
The mother kept her counsel to herself,
In nothing prais'd, or blamed.

The winter came,
And then the spring, with all its charms to stir
The heart to hope and love. Tryonne Lagrange
Paid constant visits to the Place, and spoke
Of all their happy future, and their wedding day,

So long postponed, because her mother, ill,
Claimed Wilhelmina's care. Impatient, oft
He begg'd of her to name the joyful hour,
If it must be, in some most quiet way.
As often, she would kindly plead her mother's wish,
And that it could not be for over long.

It was the midnight of a stormy day,
While dark, and darker grew th' sky with clouds,
Ablaze at times with th' lightning's ragged glare,
And rent as oft with th' thunder's dreadful stroke;
That in a sudden lull of th' sobbing winds,
There fell a sigh on Wilhelmina's ear!
That instant brought her ever ready feet
To th' sufferer's couch, in time to catch the words :
" The tide is going out." Softly, she plac'd
Her ear close to her mother's quiv'ring lips,
To assure herself that she was dreaming.

Then

It was, that first in all her life, she mark'd
The high-bred features of her mother's face.
So blind to choicest things, from common use,
We often are! yet, more observant she,
Than usual with her age. The vision struck
Her like a revelation! By the light
Of the soft chandelier, she clearly trac'd
The lines of what must once have been a face
Most beautiful, with all the beauty born
Of womanhood's fruition. On a brow

Of graceful form, there rested snowy hair,
As white clouds on the mountain's glory rest
At evening time !

A dreadful crash ! that shook
Each timber of the house, awaken'd her,
And starting up, she said : " It was a dream ;
And yet, not all a dream. My fingers feel
So strange ; I think the tide is setting out ;
And one request I have to make before
I'm gone. As you remember, years ago
I said, ' sometime I'll tell you all, my child.'
First, take yon book, and read the poem mark'd."

And this is what she found :

" Two bosom friends, in daliance stood,
Upon a sunny day ;
With hands both clasp'd in joyous mood,
Across a stream, that lay
Between—the stream of temperament—
That sang upon its way,
Such strains, as to their friendship lent,
The charm of lovely May.

A storm arose ; and while each face,
Its shadow turned to hide,
That little stream grew wild apace,
As if the wrong to chide ;

And scrap'd a channel, twixt their feet;
As yet, more deep than wide;
And what had sung before so sweet,
Became a roaring tide.

But for delay, a little bound
Would still, that river clear;
A little word would heal the wound,
But each held back in fear;
Till crumbling banks drive them apart,
And yawning chasms appear
So wild and wide, no human art
Can make each other hear.

Then in amaze, they wake to find
Themselves from heav'n, shut out
By gulf impassable; and grind
Their teeth, or try to shout
Some malediction, but in vain;
For all life's further route
Doth lie, thro' desert wastes of pain,
With shadows hedg'd about."

At length, she said,
With trembling lips, and eyes suffus'd with tears;
"My dearest mother, I have done, as bid."

"'Twas a hard thing, you ask'd of me, that day,
And long has been a burden on my heart.
Your father is a noble man; kind to the poor;

Too proud to stoop to do his neighbor wrong ;
While he is in all learning well inform'd,
And worthy so, of your respect and love.
But his one fault, of which you know, it was,
That drove us wide apart.

I knew it all
Before I married him ; and so have put
Upon myself, the greater blame. I could
Not bear, e'en from a child, discordant notes
In sound, or taste. Unpleasant orders set
My teeth on edge. It is a little thing,
Of which I am to speak ; but still, it grew,
Just like the gulf, impassable at last ;
And caus'd more grief, because so small, and long
Delay'd in execution ; for, I saw
It daily grow, well knowing what the end
Must be ; and that, the growing channel should
Be bridg'd, but I could not. The breath
Of him, who loves the weed, is tainted like
The lips of death. In vain, I tried to lock
My feelings in my breast. It made me sick
At times ; and then, you know, e'en sweetest flowers,
Or rarest dish that does not relish, oft
Begets lasting dislike. He notic'd this,
And thought his kisses were at fault ; and turn'd
Away in rage. In vain I sought to draw
Him back ; each new offence, but greater grew.
And thus, I strove, and suffered long, and died
A hundred deaths in vain ! And so, began
My life-long widowhood."

“Now, Wilhelmina;”

And as she spoke, her voice took on a tone,
That seemed unearthly in its tenderness;
“Promise the one, who loves you most of all,
You will not wed Tryonne Lagrange, until
He shall renounce its use; your own good sense,
Will tell you why.”

“I promise, Mother dear.”

Exhausted, there upon her snowy couch,
The weary sufferer lay; her throat conceal'd,
By a soft myst'ry of immac'late lace;
And her wan, delicate fingers, banded still
With their wedding ring, in Wilhelmina's press'd,
That now, some mouths confess'd kindred device.

The night thnnder'd itself away; then, came
Still other nights of long and patient watch
For Wilhelmina. Still, the Master of
The Place, her father, Granville Courtney, came
Not to the room. And yet, by nature, he
Was not a hard, unfeeling man; for oft,
As when her mother was at worst, he sat
The night away, in his own dreary room,
Envelop'd in dense clouds of smoke; thro' which,
He seem'd to hunt the spectres that annoy'd
His present, and the visions trace afar
Of happy days.

At last, the end had come;
As come, it must, to all that love, and lose,
Or gain.

A month had dragg'd itself away ;
And then, another month ; to one, at least,
In this roe-footed world, it seem'd so like
A sluggish stream, slowly meandering down
A low, flat country all its way to the sea.
The first spring days were peeping thro' the gates,
Of all the sunny South, like ragged urchins, half
Afraid to enter ; when Tryonne Lagrange,
Rode up, that night, to Courtney Place.

A form

Came forth to meet him at the door, as fair
As light. The hour itself was one of all
Unutterable loveliness ; and lent
Its charms, to give his mission urgency.
He plead with all the eloquence of love,
That now she name their wedding day.

What was

It made her shrink, and turn so deathly pale?
'Twas then, brave heart, she told him all ; told him
Her mother's last request.

In vain, he plead

His love for her ; his pride, with chosen friends ;
In vain, he tried to argue her ; and said,
She had no love for him !

How she endur'd

The burning words he spoke, God only knows !
And to them all, but meekly plead her word

As sacred; still, as one who has not thought
In vain, observ'd, it was a little thing,
She asked; that love was but a synonym
For give; and yet, that little thing, he now
Allow'd to rob him of herself!

He turn'd

In anger, then, to go away; but she
Detain'd him for a moment, just to say :
"Tryonne Lagrange is the one name on earth
Most dear. I never can another love;
So if you can at any time make good
My mother's wish, come back to me."

Never

Did soldier brave, more dreadful battle wage,
Against such fearful odds. The very air
Seem'd sick and faint; the earth reel'd to and fro.
Beneath her feet; as hastening to her room,
She threw herself upon her snowy bed,
And in her pillow—house of refuge—arms
Of God for stricken womankind, she buried
Her face, and wept her grief to mastery.
The midnight stars, that watch'd o'er Courtney Place,
First heard a plaintive warble on the air;
And listening, bore away this victor song:

"Oh! hand of blistering wrong!

Oh! cup so bitter strong!

From which I shrink, yet, I must drink;

For life is short, and love is long.

Oh ! life, so dear, so brief !
Oh ! love, the cause of grief !
My life I live, my love I give
'To others now, who need relief."

In a few days, Tryonne Lagrange made haste
To enter business, in a distant place.
At first, a letter now and then between
Them pass'd ; but that was shortly dropp'd.
All was, as if the silence of the grave
Had closed forever on their love !

Next morn,
Brave Wilhelmina, waiting not the call,
Rose from her sleepless couch, and went about,
As she was wont ; the only change, if change
It might be named, in one by nature kind,
Was that, a tender interest showed itself,
In what she did for all. By day and night,
It was her joy, her life, to flood the path
Of some grief-darken'd soul, with the sunshine
Of her sweet sympathy. Her father, soon,
And all the servants in the house, had felt
The great transforming power of her ministries.
Among the city poor, oft in disguise
She went, to scatter mercies 'mong the sick,
And courage, most of all, among the faint ;
Doing such deeds as angels envy man.
Thro' all the fever'd hospitals, she went ;
Her presence and her smile, where'er she pass'd,

Met answer'd smiles, that woke in hope and health ;
For health is as contagious as disease.
E'en so, the shadow of a Peter wrought
Such wondrous cures ! "It was her way," they said.
Not what she did, so much as that she gave
Her thought, her love, herself for every one ;
And that is what this hungry world most needs.
It was with her an atmosphere, which spoke,
Ere yet a word was said, to every ear ;
That she was one of the King's Daughters, all
As beautiful within, as fair without.

So time ran on ; and no one guess'd the grief
She hid within her heart ; till it began
To tell upon her health ; and then her friends
Besought that she would rest and quiet take,
Beside the sea.

Six years had pass'd ; but she
Was still as fair, as when Tryonne Lagrange
First won her love ; only, a witching shade
Of sadness linger'd in her lustrous eyes,
That made her more attractive.

By the sea,
The one, with whom it has a passion grown
To aid and bless mankind, will even find
Something to do. A pleasant hour was plann'd
For all the stranger guests. At their request,
She was beguil'd to sing ; and once, her rich,

And mellow voice, was heard, each had a song,
He loved to hear. A note came to her hand
At length, requesting that she sing for them
Her favorite song. No name was signed to the
Request; but, at a glance, she gave a start
In recognition of a well-known hand.
With pallid features, she began at once,
To hum a soft prelude; not daring e'en,
To look about her, knowing that, he who
Was once, her own heart's king, was hov'ring near;
And then, with a deep quaver like a half
Fledg'd sob, her voice floated away in song.

"No fairest summer day will always last;
And summer friends, alas! as soon are fled;
A wind springs up, the sky is overcast
With om'nous clouds; and down before the blast
Mad torrents rush, all fring'd with lurid red;
Scarping a yawning gulf 'twixt friend and friend
Deep as the grave, when life and beauty end.

Across that gulf, where lulls the blinding storm,
Who calls old friends by name, lists but in vain!
Such loss is death, no matter what the form.
The heart that mourns is tender, yet, and warm;
The flowers are freshest, soonest after rain;
And thought, forth rushes thick as busy bees,
Knelling the air with mellow memories.

Deep in the shadow of the mournful past,
Wander the ghosts of all our living dead.

In shrouds of silence wrapt, as cold as vast,
And shrinking far from sight, as topmost mast ;
Yet naught can lay their lone disquieting tread,
As nightly they stroll forth, when others sleep
With bolted doors, and thro' the key-holes creep."

The instant that her voice rose on the air,
The whispering ceased ; and every face, as if
Enthrall'd by magic, hung upon the sweet,
Sad melody. At times, her audience seem'd
Transported back, once more, to childhood ; where,
'Mid blossoming apple trees, they heard entranc'd
The early robins sing ; again, they seem'd
To hear the clouds begin to fall upon
The coffin lid, of some remember'd form ;
And then, they seem'd to follow her, e'en up
The starry stairway of the skies, where broke
O'er them, world-melodies from seraph spheres !

After each verse, she play'd an interlude,
That wove around e'en common themes, an air
Divine. And, when the song was done, there came
A mournful aftermath, as if to gain
More time, to hide the grief she felt, and check
The tears, that seem'd, despite her will, about
To tell her secret thro' her speaking eyes.
Just then, she caught a most untimely glimpse
Of a remember'd face ! Unable longer
The flood of pent up feelings to restrain,
With a half-smother'd cry, she swoon'd and fell,

Like a poor lifeless bird, into the arms
Of her long absent love !

'Tis only those,
Who greatly live in mind, and heart, that, when
Their hour shall come, can greatly speak and act.
The soul, that throbs in every accent of
The voice, is more than all the words we use ;
The rivulet is wrinkled by the wind ;
But when the ocean is with tempest toss'd,
The bellowing waves run mountains high.

Alone,
That night, beneath the ever wakeful stars,
He said : "I came to claim the promise that
You made ; nor dream'd to startle one, who, all
These tardy years, has lived expectant ; so,
Forgive the double wrong."

And then, she gave
Her lips to his, now pure as heaven, from such
Baptismal dews, in a long kiss, that told
More sweetly than all words, what most she felt,
But could not speak !

And so, to his request,
That now' the happy day might soon be named,
She said : " 'Tis as you will."

Thus, they were wed,
Ere yet the summer birds had flown. Long years
Have pass'd, since then; and children's children rise
To call them bless'd. The aim of each has ever been
The other's happiness; and thus their love
Has ripen'd with the harvest days, into
A richer joy than youthful lovers know:
In what is still, as from the first, one of
The sunniest homes, in all the Sunny South.

November, 1888.

UNDER FIRE.

JOLLY boy, in soldier dress ;
See him walk !
Just sworn in ? You rightly guess ;
Hear him talk.

To the front, his squad is sent,
By and by ;
Thunder shakes the firmament ;
He doth fly.

Is a man, as good, as grand
In attire ?
None can tell, until he stand
Under fire.

So, the one who errs from good,
'Tis not well
To condemn ; till thou hast stood,
Where he fell.

March, 1888.

MISFORTUNE.

WITH heart, as light as dew
That falls unhurt upon the pointed spear;
What tho' my steps misfortune doth pursue?
I nothing have to fear.

By th' cross the crown is won.
When men forsake, then God doth draw more near;
When friends haste by, my burden so to shun,
His chariot I hear.

However great the wrong,
Murmur I not, who turns his back on me
Hungry for love. The more I thus belong,
All loving Christ, to thee.

'Tis now, from malice free,
God's purposes at last are clearly shown.
As fame, and friends have oft been false to me,
I look to God alone.

The dreams of long ago,
Return transform'd, and all my being throng
With angel choirs, whose lips, like brooklets flow,
With sweet and sunny song.

Such loss, to me is gain.
Oh! never gain so great that comes to man,
As stern misfortune, winnowing the grain,
With heavy flail and fan.

And thus, I seem to stand
Inside the portals of a fairer clime,
Where waves of joy roll up the golden strand,
And break o'er me sublime!

O Providence divine!
That leadeth me, to count all losses gain.
The martyr flames, that so life's gold refine,
Make me fire-proof to pain!

1886.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

THRO' all the day, it hides away
Among the covert trees;
Or, flits aground, with airy bound
Of coy, and dainty feet;
As shadows fleet, of rosebuds sweet
When shaken by the breeze;
And naught reveals, but that it feels,
Like other birds we meet.

But soon as night creeps up the height,
From deep and darksome caves,
And common birds, with bashful words,
Compose themselves to rest;
A fitful flush, as of the rush
Of winds, from off the waves
Of oceans lone with shipwrecks strown,
Springs up within its breast.

Then, with a start, gush from its heart,
Like showers of April rain,
From ether climes, the star-toned rhymes
Of an immortal lay;
The history and mystery,
Of earthly night and pain,
This wakeful bird, alone hath stirr'd,
When light has flown away.

Not in the light, but in the night,
Is sung the deathless song.
In Saga fine, or Psalm divine,
A stricken hero wails.
To deepest night, e'en loss of sight,
The Iliad doth belong.
God doth impart, such matchless art,
Alone to nightingales.

1876.

TRANSMUTATION.

THE briefest hour that ponders blame,
Doth make us feel the burning shame
 Of weakness.
Some twenty things in life appear,
We would expunge with sorrow's tear,
 In meekness.

When lo! we trace each golden thread
That runs thro' life, to faults, that bred
 Decision.
And so, to wipe our wrongs away,
Would e'en efface what doth convey
 Elysian.

Thus, folly e'en, we may transmute;
And to our ill, our good impute,
 With reason.
So, sorrow blooms, in after hours,
Some thousand form, like fragrant flowers
 In season.

1887.

THE INNER EYE.

THERE is an eye undimm'd by age,
That things and thoughts compares.
In darkest night, it reads the page
Of Time's ill-writ affairs.

The ocean's caves, it doth explore,
And mountain's heart of fire;
And things reveals, unseen before,
Thro' touch of poet's lyre.

It sees an angel in the block,
From marble quarries wrought,
And guides the chisel thro' the rock,
That wakes the lovely thought.

The palace fit to grace a throne,
It views with rapt surprise,
While yet, it sleeps in tree and stone,
Unseen by mortal eyes.

The steps of progress it doth lead,
In ways untrod before;
The statesman guides, and such as read
God's statutes, more and more.

Thus, all of heaven on earth we know,
With all that's strange and new ;
And all the good we have to show,
To this same eye are due.

It sees a thousand years afar,
The coming race of men ;
And things to be, as things that are,
With clear, prophetic ken.

Such power reveals an agency,
Back of the flesh it bears ;
That somehow there, as spirit free,
The middle forehead wears.

To me, it seems, however odd,
Small were the loss of eyes ;
Since, with this sight, blind Milton trod
The realms of paradise !

Such gifted ones, on earth astray,
From time to time appear,
Who look ahead, and lead the way ;
The mission of the seer.

May 1888.

IF I WERE KING?

IF I were king, in all my realm,
Each shameless wrong, that weakness snared,
With dreadful scourge, I'd overwhelm,
Somewhere, somehow, to show I cared.

The hero soul, who stood alone
Against the world, to make men free,
I would not leave, to make the moan,
"Why, why, hast thou forsaken me?"

I would not charm the ill-starr'd pair,
With bridal joys, and sunny hours;
But heaven drape in black despair,
And rain tear-drops, in blinding showers.

The flying train of burden'd cars,
With charming women, men as hale,
I would arrest with falling stars,
Ere it should reach the broken rail.

The lazy bunting, I would scare
From Chippie's nest in dewy morn;
And earth should blush in blossoms fair,
Instead of pale with briar and thorn.

And thus, we dream that to prevent
Dread cruelty, God from the sky,
Should bare his arm in wonderment,
And make the harpies fly.

So slight a change, as first it seems,
Would revolutionize the world !
Farewell to earth's fond, pretty dreams ;
Another flag would be unfurl'd

Then, man would hang on heaven's command,
Nor ever trust the inner light.
His trooping thoughts would all disband,
Since they no more would need to fight.

E'en virtue thus, would vice become,
And forethought show a want of wit ;
The bee would whoop instead of hum,
And all things be just opposite.

The line of beauty would be straight,
And dew-drops then, would hang in prisms ;
The use of means be out of date,
And poetry dress in syllogisms.

For were green earth enrob'd with red,
The ocean pink, instead of blue ;
An amber sky must arch o'er head,
And every eye be made anew.

And when the change had thus been made,
And all things brought again to rest,
So many faults, the work would shade,
I think we'd say: "God's way is best." *May 1888.*

THE CLOWN'S SERMON.

THE tide of mirth ran high; the clown
With ready wit, and merry jest,
Play'd with the crowd, as winds, swept down
Upon a wood, from mountain crest.
E'en dearest things, he did not spare!
When to the call, like thunder loud,
He'd sang a hymn, and made a prayer;
"A sermon preach," burst from the crowd!

Quick as a flash, he doff'd his hat,
And stood erect, with solemn mien,
Inside the ring; "The gospel that
I preach," he said, "herein, is seen;
O! Christians you, who throng these tiers,
The Bible are, that sinners read;
And how you greet this show with cheers,
Doth furnish me the text I need.

More money we shall raise to-day,
Than any parson in the town
Receives a year, I dare to say;
And much of this, to pay a clown
To play the fool, church people give,
Who plead excuse, when asked to aid
Some worthy cause; they barely live,
So hard the times, and poor is trade.

I am a fool, because it pays;
But wisdom you profess, and yet,
My folly still support, and praise
The animals, that you forget
Soon as the circus show begins.
O'er such pretense, read like a book,
The worldling prates of "outs and ins,"
That make all saints as sinners look.

'Tis not, that Truth is wan, and weak,
And wanting charms a hundred fold
More eloquent than any Greek;
The worldly wise, so very bold
To win the fair, neglect her so!
The fault is yours, O Christians! all,
Who for pretense, in empty show,
Before men's eyes on Heaven call!

It is because ye hold the truth,
As if a lie—something ye may
With safety toy—because, forsooth,
Ye do not practice, as ye pray;
That o'er the earth, the onward sweep
Of righteousness, so long is stay'd;
And Truth, far up Time's awful steep,
Imperil'd clings, tho' undismay'd.

The pearl, that's cast before your eyes,
All blazing with supernal fire—
Thus, Truth reveals its native skies—
You trample down, deep in the mire,

With cloven feet; then, turn and rend
The gentle hand of spotless love,
Outstretch'd to grasp a falling friend,
And lift from earth his gaze above.

What e'er for you, sweet Pity ask,
As men, your fault no tenderness
Deserves, from which I hurl the mask,
Who hold Truth in unrighteousness!"
The tent was hush'd; in silence rose
The parting crowd. Still, in that town,
Of sermons preach'd, the story goes,
The best of all, was by a clown.

August, 1888.

NOT FOR ME.

A MARBLE house, white as the foam
 Upon the sea ;
With woodland park, in which to roam,
 Is not for me.

A lightning span by thunder foal'd,
 Of speed unknown ;
And shining coach mounted with gold,
 I may not own.

Yet, for such things, I have an eye
 That never tires ;
To study them, in passing by,
 My being fires.

For mansion fair, and team divine,
 Thanks, thanks fine friend !
You slave yourself to make them shine,
 I nothing spend.

Envy of those, who have the care,
 Is not for me ;
Since, I enjoy the larger share,
 From trouble free.

February, 1888.

THE KING AND I.

THE King doth wear a splendid crown,
So do I;
Great courtiers envy his renown,
Not so I.
He is no richer with his jewel,
Than am I;
Who gather driftwood for my fuel,
Floating by.
Upon his head, his crown doth smart;
I wear content, upon my heart.
He hath his kingdom great and fair,
So have I;
Whose steeples pierce the air,
Far and high.
He is no greater with his honors,
Than am I;
Who on the Andes watch the condors,
Flying by.
His kingdom vast, the sword has wrought;
My kingdom is the realm of thought.
He hath his palace large and fine,
So have I;
Where vassals flock to see him dine,
Far and nigh.

He is no safer in his tower,
Than am I,
With but a cottage for my dower,
'Neath the sky.
His house was built by human hands;
Mine is a growth of all the lands.

The king has friends to guard his throne,
So have I;
Yet not his interests, but their own,
They desery;
So fawn and flatter, whom they hate,
On the sly;
Mine love me for my simple state;
What am I?
His throne is made for one alone;
But mine I share with man unknown.

For his estate I do not grieve;
No, not I!
Mine is the better part, by your leave,
That deny;
For he will leave his at death's portals,
By and by;
While mine will bide with the immortals,
When I die.
So happy I, and wretched he;
And yet, the king won't change with me!

1887.

WHAT MAN VALUES MOST.

UPON the bridge in simple garb,
With song divinely pure and fair,
The poet Aldhelm often stood,
Singing just for the love of good,
His ballads and sweet gospels there,
To those who chanced to pass along.

To women robed in rich attire,
And men of fortune and affairs—
The practical in turn of mind,
A sumptuous livelihood to find;
The poet with his bird-like airs,
A truly piteous figure seem'd!

But now, that years have roll'd away,
The name of e'en the richest man
Who cross'd that bridge, we do not know;
Nor do the dusty records show,
To him that doth their pages scan,
What woman wore the costliest robe!

But, centuries to centuries
Have handed down the poet's name!
And of his life, the facts remain,

As fresh as flowers after rain ;
While those who pass'd, for Aldhelm's fame,
Would all their wealth now freely give !

And thus, howe'er it oft may seem
Amid the rush and roar of time ;
'Tis poetry, religion, God—
The thing that lifts us from the sod,
And makes existence here sublime,
That man, at last, does value most !

January, 1889.

DIVINE UNREST.

ALL greatness is beset, like giant forest tree,
Thro' every wind that blows, with stormful drudgery.
In littleness alone, there is tranquility.

Across the quiet planes, all nature seems asleep;
While on the mountain tall, wild waters roar and sweep,
Volcanoes burst and blaze, and avalanches leap.

Embosom'd 'mid the hills, the little lakelet lies;
The while the mighty seas, where earth its commerce plies,
Forever ebb and flow, and with billows smite the skies.

The air is hush'd to rest, 'neath the cathedral dome;
While 'neath the spacious sky, outside our wintry home,
Thro' pine woods dark as gloom, the moaning currents
 roam.

So is the brute bepraised,² placid and self-contain'd;
O'er duty left undone, not one of them is pain'd;
Their wants are satisfied, when they are groom'd and
 grain'd.

They do not fret and sweat, about their lowly fare,
They do not lie awake, oppress'd with worldly care,—
There's not enough of them, to frame a simple prayer.

But man is full of toils, his longings to relieve ;
A thousand wayward schemes, his fancy doth conceive ;
O'er his ambitions, strifes, the tearful ages grieve.

Earth's souging winds and waves, thro' all his being roll,
And mountain crest and cave, all lie within his soul ;
For, in his nature vast, he comprehends the whole.

The voices of the world, all find their reason why,
In something of his life. A spirit from on high,
E'en vaster than the winds, is vented in his sigh !

No envy thus, have we, for creatures greatly less ;
For placid ox or idiot, too small to know distress—
The things, that may be groom'd and fed to blessedness.

1887.

AN IDLE WISH.

OH ! had I wings, oft fancy sings,
Then would I fly away,
And build my nest, and be at rest,
Thro' all life's summer day.

'Tis a mistake, we often make,
When things go wrong without ;
To think the range, of fields of change,
Would turn the world about.

No lofty flights, o'er mountain heights,
Would leave our cares behind.
They follow fast, as shadows cast,
By the desponding mind.

In distant Rome, just as at home,
The mind still acts the same.
No one can stray, himself away,
By any artful game.

E'en if all grief should play the thief,
And steal aside from man,
His restless eye would fault the sky,
For want of grief to scan.

To fret inclined; yet, man may find,
In life's most humble range,
A true heart's ease, like quiet seas,
By seeking inward change.

So, care dismiss, and learn but this;
All things are for the best;
Then, be thy lot, a manse, or cot,
Thou art supremely blest.

1887.

THE WATER LILY.

MY lady flower with th' heart of gold !
Fair as a bride, in her snow-like array,—
'Neath sunny skies its petals wide unfold,
That with their sweetness fill the skirts of day.
Of airy form, and step of perfect grace ;
A dream, afloat upon a crystal lake !
The lovely creature of a sky-born race,
Snow'd down from heaven in the folds of a flake !

Ah, no ! 'tis cradled in earth's slimy mould,
Of sparkling lake, or of the noisome ditch.
Its fitness is for each, a heart of gold,
That doth the soil of poverty enrich.

No matter where a lily, thus, may grow ;
Its charm is still the same, whate'er its birth,
In waters rippling, as when running slow ;
For beauty, beauty is, and worth is worth.

Then, sing we not a sad, dejected air,
Of grim environments ! Man doth unfold,
Whate'er the lot, most wondrous sweet and fair ;
True water lily, if his heart be gold !

November, 1887.

THE SOUL OF THINGS IS GOOD.

THE trend of earth is toward the sky,
And Nature all instinct with right!
The daisy turns to Heaven its eye,
And sweetly thinks its thoughts in white.

Upon the waves that ebb and flow,
Among the tall and tangled brakes,
The lily knows which way to go ;
Pure conscience of the crystal lakes.

The fair cascade, that leaps from rock
To rock, down steeps where torrents plow,
The angels paint in flowing frock,
A saintly halo on its brow.

The granite hills, that changeless stand,
'Mid everlasting change, forsooth,
So awe inspiring, peerless, grand!
Are all, the monuments of Truth.

An ethical spirit is enshrin'd,
In rock and river, hill and dell ;
Nay, space and time ; all things combin'd,
Subsist alone, its mind to tell!

Nor state, nor school is secular,
Where science and the arts make gain ;
Their light, in fine, is like a star,
Profane alone to the profane.

October, 1888.

AGREEMENT.

MEN differ, but in words. Deep at the heart
Of all philosophies, the life pulse beats
The same. Thud, thad—the sound my list'ning greets,
Where e'er my head, with sympathetic art,
Is on some bosom laid. With them, to start,
Of old ; the earth, an elephant beseats,
That strides a turtle ; it, a snake that eats
Its tail, signing the Infinite his part !
Thus, men to-day, oft heathen named, feel back
The chain of causes and effects, until
They can no farther go ; and then, they say, that still
The law—'tis but the serpent's coil—to crack
Of doom, all nature doth upbear. 'Tis odd,
The infidel's should prove the Christian's God !³

December, 1888.

WORSHIP.

BEHOLD the race upon its knees,
A mystery of mysteries!
And yet, a world-wide fact,
As many voic'd, as are the seas,
Oft zephyr fann'd, and tempest rack'd!

The earth-ball hums with pray'r and praise,
Along its way.
By night and day,
The ages thro', what millions raise,
The suppliant cry to Heaven!
Their grateful songs are always singing,
Their worship bells are ever ringing;
No other leaven
Hath work'd itself, so in the rhyme,
Of every race, in every clime!

With listening ear,
We thus may overhear,
A murmur sweet and clear;
As of a swarm of bees,
In linden trees;
Running along, as darkness flies,
The dewy line of earth's sunrise.

Zone after zone,
Awakes from sleep to offer praise,
In varied ways ;
But not, to God alone.
To Buddha, Allah, and the Sun,
The morning rite is done.
Thus, each belt round the globe,
Its million sleepy heads
The Sun starts from their beds,
To robe
For worship, as for work,
That man would love to shirk.

Oft in the night's still hour,
The line of sound so clear,
From nations far and near,
Is borne along upon the air,
And thunders full upon my ear,
With all its deafening power,
Of rapture and despair !
Thus grateful lyric, and remorseful cry,
From Christian Church, and savage lair,
Go sounding on, thro' earth and sky.

Half round the globe, at the same time,
With equal pace, the evening line,
Its Angelus so sweet and fine,
Creates an antiphon sublime !

Thus, when the lines of night and day,
 Both trail across the peopled earth,
 The worship swells; it dies away,
 Fast as they reach the ocean's girth.
 And, as one line doth always stand,
 One foot on sea, and one on land,
 Earth's hum doth never end;
 But like a harp with strings acraze,
 In upper air, its discords blend,
 We fondly hope, to perfect praise!

December, 1887.

LIFE IS TOO SHORT FOR HATE.

Life is too short, for hate.
We mingle here, but one brief day,
Too brief, for what we meant to say,
When it is all, too late!

Life is too short, for hate.
The hand is on the rope, to ring
Thy knell; and death doth open swing,
E'en now, the wicket gate!

Life is too short, for hate.
The tree is green, that soon shall wave
Its leafy plumes, above thy grave.
In that returnless state.

Life is too short, for hate.
With him we strive, ah! soon, we must
All mingle with pathetic dust,
In worlds, beyond debate.

May, 1888.

ICONOCLASM.

THE sentiment is rare,
A poet's dream wrought out of starlight fair.
The execution bold;
An eagle's swoop, upon a Persian fold!
The Phidian image of Homeric Jove,
Alluring, still, the world to its alcove.

But ah! the statue's old;
And in its dreamy hair, the hateful mould
Of centuries of decay!
Up with your hammers, O! men of to-day;
And beating it to dust, cast to the sty;
Arts golden age doth in the future lie.

Yet, so, you treat amiss,
Some fair memento of a race-old bliss.
E'en Wisdom doth a myth
Still prize, that hints the way, to find the pith
Of mental history. The youth of Time
Thus yields the poetry of things sublime!

One blow of a coarse clown,
May spoil the work of schools of fine renown;
In a short hour waste Pan,
And all the age-old art of th' Vatican.

'Tis genius only, can rude stones decoy
Into arch and temple ; dunces but destroy.

Such work is most unblest'd !
Destruction is of death, by all confess'd.
Creation is of life ;
All future progress hath the now to wife ;
Thus all the past doth lie beneath the street,
And lends, as push, its fulcrum to our feet.

Our life is here too short,
With much that may be done of good report,
To waste in cynic bark !
So up and work, for soon it will be dark.
Your own wise plans perfect, that all mankind
May reason have, to keep your name in mind.

November, 1887.

SWEETNESS AND LIGHT.

BENEATH the pines that graced a wintry wood,
When yet a child, I found some pretty cones ;
And what to me, was not then understood,
I sought to solve by pounding them with stones.
Not prospered so, I put them by with care,
Where morn's sweet kiss should o'er them softly stealing,
Add its fair charms to my warm chamber air,
To try the force of some more kindly dealing.
With great delight, I found in after days
The tiny seed, that each unyielding cone
Had freely shed, wing'd ready for the flight ;
And to a flow'r of bright and airy ways,
The horny burr itself had fully blown,
To the soft touch of sweetness join'd with light.

1887.

THE PROBLEM OF LIFE.

WHAT myriads of beacons illumine the sky!
What numberless sands on the seashore lie!
Yet each of them rests, on abutments, forsooth,
As deep as Creation, and wide as Truth.

The daisy, array'd in its modest robe,
And mountain, rock-rooted in the heart of the globe,
That lift 'neath the sky their divergent heads,
Are link'd together by invisible threads.

All nature is one, in space unconfin'd,
A problem too big, for the finite mind.
In God's universe, there is nothing small;
Who knows aught complete, must comprehend all.

The flaming woodbine on the temple walls,
And the dullest of things, that burrows or crawls;
All start questionings, that send one to brood
By the gray, boundless shores of infinitude!

No plummet of thought can fathom the deep,
Where in bottomless caves the eternities sleep.
Man's chain is too short to survey a shore,
The plash of whose waves resound evermore.

O! what, with such vastness, can reason do?
Both ends of the chain are lost to man's view.
A few shining links pass beneath his hand,
The rest glide away in the unseen land.

Of knowledge complete, how ungrounded their boast,
Who can but once pass such a difficult coast.
Man's weakness bespeaks the wonderful Chart,
Whose wisdom declares, "we know but in part."

Thus, hindered by ill, and encouraged by good,
The problem of life, oft misunderstood,
Is not to demonstrate what things are sure,
But one's education, with all, to secure.

October, 1887.

MITES.

LONG, long ago, somewhere on earth,
As a hoary legend still relates,
So old, that time has blurr'd the dates,
A race of mites, in grief or mirth,
Was given birth.

Most strange to say; with wings to soar
The boundless realms of starlit thought,
And scan the works that God has wrought;
In one brief hour, or less or more,
Each life was o'er.

And some were fools and some were wise;
So sire to son the tale rehears'd,
In wisdom school'd and learning versed
Of their brief day, how earth and skies
All took their rise.

Far in the past, the story went,
The fathers saw the sun ascend
From out the East, and widely rend
The veil of night, as one intent
On wonderment!

The wise remarked its constant flight,
How age on age, it neared the West;
And reason'd clear, from learned quest,
At eve, the sun must quench its light,
In endless night.

So passed a race, the records show,
Nor ever dreamed their one day's sun,
A myriad days its course had run!
Such vain conceits to follies grow,
" *In what we know!* "

August, 1887.

SUMMERS LONG AGO.

THE golden summer rustles by,
In robings angel fair, once more ;
The same bird-songs drop down the sky,
That rang thro' summers long ago.

The airs are laden'd with perfume,
From lily, pink, and rose exhal'd ;
The very flowers, that used to bloom,
When near to earth the heavens trail'd.

At evening time, the busy bees
Wing to the hive their mellow way ;
And later flash, thro' darkening trees,
The tiny lightnings, fireflies play.

'Tis then, fond mem'ries round me throng,
Thick as the dews, that gem the dawn ;
And Nature chants her magic song ;
The spirit wail of summers gone !

Thro' glade and glen, and far and near,
A hint of Heaven in the tone,
It falls upon my inner ear,
As here I sit and dream alone.

With sadness kin to pleasure sweet,
The while I think of summers flown,
I hear a rush of nimble feet,
Adown the steeps of Time unknown.

The olden charm of bird and flower
Is broken. From th' receding shore,
I'm haunted by the knelling tower
Of summer songs, that are no more.

Nor would I, thus, the present wrong;
And yet, my heart will overflow
In twilight stillness, and I long
For summers then, of long ago.

August, 1888.

ALMA MATER.

I HAIL thee, Wittenberg ! dear college mann'd
With sweet and saintly souls ; and more and more,
I prize thy halls of unforgotten lore.
In mem'ry oft, my wearied feet now stand
Therein, and intervening years are spann'd
By recollection. As in days of yore,
Still, start, from every nook the campus o'er,
Sky-larks, that drop their notes on all the land.
In search of those who loved me then so well,
Thy sacred shades my spirit haunts in dreams.
No other spot of earth hath half thy spell
Upon my nightly wanderings ; it seems
That thus, in death the passion on me still,
I'll make for Heav'n by way of College Hill !

March, 1889.

THE GRAVES OF DEAD HOPES.

Not the earth alone is strown with graves,
That memorialize the precious dead.
In the heart, the lonely cypress waves
Over tombs, on which are plainly read
Epitaphs, for beings only real,
Who have known the loss of an ideal.

Oh! so lovely was the sunny dream,
That the child forgot his eager play,
In amaze at what afar did seem
The sweet smile of Heav'n, that summer day!
And he said, with nothing fearing, doubting,
"I will be a poet," fairly shouting!

Or, "a statesman I will surely be,
To befriend the weak, and win betimes
Gratitude—a sailor, on the sea
To embark, and trade in foreign climes"—
But, whate'er the vision he may cherish,
Thence all doubts, at its remembrance, perish.

For the dreams of what one hopes to be,
Tint the dawn of every life, forsooth,
With a glow of purple ecstasy!
The untried omnipotence of youth,

Thus anticipates the glad to-morrow,
With a heart that fears no mortal sorrow.

But as life goes tripping swiftly by,
Disappointments come, and hope on hope,
Once so sure, is given up to die ;
Thus at last, man views along the slope
He has clim'd, the graves in which are hidden
Youthful dreams, that come no more when bidden.

Strange to say ! a man is his own grave.
Every day, his heart inters its dead ;
Every day, some hope, to which he gave
Early love, expires ; 'tis only said,
" He despair'd of its success ;" and weeping,
Gives it up to mem'ry's silent keeping !

Yet sometime, perchance in twilight gray,
He must stop to count such losses o'er ;
And the graves along his pilgrim way,
Then will seem, as ripples on the shore—
All so many broken waves of being,
That appear to mock the sense of seeing !

Thus in vain, men dig with bitter tears
Deepest graves for their dead hopes. Tho' hid
Out of sight, their forms, still after years,
In our dreams will raise the coffin lid,
And come forth to taunt our keeping,
While new clay upon their graves we're heaping.

Could our eyes the hidden mound but see,
Of musician, artist, saint so sweet,
That the heart weighs down so heavily,
As men pass without a sign the street ;
We would pity more their fitful roaming,
As they rush into some fateful gloaming.

'Tis the doom of death ! Then, keep alive
All the hopes that charm thy youthful hours.
Let imagination, like a hive,
Still be wing'd with busy, humming pow'rs.
What if sixty years are even waning,
On the dreams of youth keep always gaining.

Thou shalt garner so, the joy of years ;
And with chasten'd hopes, as steps, push on
To an evening free from toils and tears,
That more lovely is, than rosy dawn ;
Where the gains of life will be ideal,
And its losses all no longer real !

April, 1889.

THE NIGHT BLOOMING CEREUS.

A HOMELIER plant one may not look to see!

Its graceless stalk, nor leaves nor blades adorn.

An ill-form'd child, of coarsest pedigree,

Born to a humble future all forlorn.

We watch the plain-faced creature still, awhile,

When lo! its lips grow red, curtain'd by night,

And every feature blooms, as if a smile

Had burst in fibrils delicate as light.

So, rarest beauty oft is born from womb

Of gross deformity. In spite of fate,

The flower of humble life, from solar love

Long treasured up, in darkest night will bloom

Into sweet holiness, or soon or late,

Whose beauty is perfume in worlds above.

1888.

SUMMER EVETIDE.

THE summer day spins down to set of sun,
And yellow light flames in the window panes.
From chimney tops, tall shadows Eastward run,
To meet the car of night, whose coursers, dun,
Shake off brown dusk from their thick, ebon manes.

Sweet are the sounds borne on the air so still!
The song of wood-thrush to its dusky mate;
The sheep-bells tinkle on the purple hill;
E'en gabble of the geese down by the mill,
And lowing of the kine brought to the gate.

Ere long, while now we watch the changing hour,
The sunset fires, kindling the wooded heights,
Turn Time's gray flood, by some strange, magic power,
To gold-red eve—as fair as orient bower,
Where all the passing clouds blush their good nights.

The summer day hath thus its blest evetide;
An angel sent of God, to soothe man's path
With softest hush, restraining heated pride,
And hinting, oft betimes, whate'er betide,
“See that the sun go not down on thy wrath.”

1887.

NIGHT.

'Tis night, what time the toiler sees
The fruit of years, all swept away
By trusted ones he thought to please,
That on his goods, thence live at ease;
And he must work while growing gray.

'Tis night, when in some dusky shape,
Misfortune shadows o'er a life;
And not a friend but waits agape,
Or turns aside his hat to crape,
When help is needed in the strife.

'Tis night, when the sweet child we love,
No longer runs to climb our knees;
And swallow note, or crooning dove,
Recalls the voice of one above,
Whose steps we hear in every breeze.

Still, grieve we not; since 'tis the time
That other worlds come forth, so nigh,
We overhear their rhythmic chime,
And know ourselves by sign sublime,
The sons and daughters of the Most High!

January, 1888.

MORNING.

THE night has oft been wild and weary,
From frightful things that we have dreamed,
As down from off their mountain aerie,
The fierce storm eagles wildly scream'd ;
While a hot flush, that went and came,
Like feelings sprung from deadly pain,
As sharp as chill, shot thro' our frame,
Half drench'd with frozen rain.

But, with a forehead arch'd and white,
The morning came, as oft before.
All bath'd with floods of holy light,
It peep'd in thro' the open door
Of th' mourner, broken of his rest ;
Its noiseless feet with rose-mists shod,
As tripping o'er the mountain crest,
It bore the smile of God.

Thro' sorrow's night comes morning joy,
With sea of blue, that bounds us o'er ;
And sunlight, ever arch and coy,
That glints its oars from shore to shore ;
While every rain-drop, pendant, flashes
On the rosy tips of fragrant flowers ;
Like tears on childhood's sunny lashes,
When once no longer ours.

MORNING.

While here, man needs such adverse days,
As pictures need both light and shade.
The hopeful heart sheds golden rays,
O'er dark back-grounds by sorrow made ;
But soon, a morning there will be,
To cloudless day of the immortals,
That has no night, and soon, we'll see
The lifting of its portals !

January 1888.

THE BELLS OF SHANDON.

LONG, long ago, in days, forsooth,
When th' stongest sword decided truth,
A saintly monk, whose only wealth
Below, was doing good by stealth ;
Who day and night, thus, sought to find
Some humble way, to bless mankind ;
Was exiled from his sacred home,
And doom'd in foreign lands to roam.

His abbey stood beside the Lee,
'Mid cloister'd rock and praying tree ;
And morn and noon, and stilly night,
Thro' all his life, with hush'd delight,
He'd listen'd to the chiming bells
Of Shandon ; till, as winded shells
Are haunted by the sounding sea,
Their music coiled thro' memory.

Long months and years had dragg'd away.
The broken hearted man was gray
With age ; yet still, in foreign climes,
The sound of those rich, holy chimes
Was fresh and clear. He would again
Hear the sweet, abbey bells ! and when
His days should end, supremely bless'd
By their soft tones, be knell'd to rest.

So, o'er the Alps, his weary way
He made on foot. With least delay
Thro' France, thro' England, jaded pass'd,
Till Bristol reach'd, he there at last
Took ship for Cork. Ent'ring the Cove
With lazy sail, each castled grove,
Thence up the Lee, and rocks and trees,
Swept chords of golden memories.

At length the boat approach'd the shore,
Each sailor toiling at his oar ;
And just as day takes leave of night,
The abbey walls appear'd in sight,
When all at once, the bells began
The vesper peal ; most happy man !
The joy was more than he could bear ;
The rowers stopp'd and sprinkled there,

Pure water on his marble brow,
And lifted him, upon the prow,
To catch the breeze ; but, he was dead !
In that sweet trance, his soul had fled.
And so were man, God's face to see,
In some great hour of ecstasy ;
Its sweetness such, the charm so great,
'Twould lure him thro' the wicket gate !

September, 1888.

THE GOLD BANDED LILY.

O LOVELY flower, most angel fair!
Induct me to thy mystic art,
That to base earth and common air,
Doth e'en the charm of Heaven impart.
Reveal to me the holy rite,
That wakes rich life from dull, black mould;
That thro' the green conducts the white,
And in the white lays bands of gold.
So shall my life to beauty grow,
Like Him who loved the lilies so;
In word and look divinely kind;
In action chaste and thought refined;
And all my days be full of light,
As thus I walk with God in white.

February, 1888.

FAILURE.

THE Sybils say, "On Earth, the only road
To sure success, is by, 'what might have been;'
And in this world's great, chancery code,
That failure is, the one unpardonable sin."

Too late, 'tis to amend, when one is down!
Yet what will prosper, none can ever know.
Meanwhile the passing world tucks up its gown,
And utters with a scorn, "I told you so!"

* . * * * *

Upon a charger proud, one rode abreast
Of all the foremost ranks of valiant men,
To do and dare, at truth's and country's hest,
Such deeds as tingle o'er a poet's pen.

And where the battle din rose fierce and loud,
And wrathful tempests pour'd their leaden hail,
That gored the ground, and fast unhors'd the proud,
He fell, the hero of an unwrit tale!

A comrade faint, that linger'd in the rear
Until the crisis clock had struck the hour,
Then mounted in hot haste, and follow'd near;
And from the field that day, he rode to power.

The coward rose, e'en by the hero's fall;
And in the times remote, he lived to reap
Great harvest sheaves of fame, and feasts withal;
While low, the hero doth forgotten sleep!

* * * * *

Still, bedded in the mind, the seeds of laws
E'en germinate beneath our sordid skies,
And bloom to show that, in a worthy cause,
He never truly fails, who nobly tries.

Thus Heaven's living oracles declare,
"The path of duty is not over long;"
And wide as Earth, they voice it thro' the air,
"He only fails who doth succeed by wrong!"

1886.

CONSERVATION.

No worthy deed doth ever die.

The waters now in rain descend,
That back again, as vapors, fly
In fruitful rounds that never end.

No gentle word can ever fail.

The passing breeze will come again,
In zephyr mild or mountain gale,
With fresh supplies of oxygen.

No cheerful smile is e'er in vain.

The sunbeam sports in tropic bower,
That sleeps in coal, and wakes again
In engine fires to motive power.

All is but change ; nothing is lost.

E'en the reformer's want of sight,
As thunder claps, at awful cost,
Originate electric light.

Tho' it may seem thy good is gone ;

All moral force is still conserv'd
'Neath other forms, and reaching on,
To coming man shall be preserv'd.

The martyr thus, of bygone time,
Who pass'd away in flames of fire,
In present good, that reigns sublime,
Doth e'en attain his heart's desire.

O precious truth ! No noble strife,
Tho' lost to sight, is thrown away ;
But, mingling with all human life,
It helps to tide the better day.

April, 1888.

LIFE.

LIKE a sigh, or a breath,
Our life is past ;
With a birth and a death,
It ends at last.

'Tis the spray of a tide,
That comes and goes
On a sea, that is wide,
And ceaseless flows—

Flows and flows, till the Night,
And Silence reign ;
And gray Time, dim of sight,
Expires in pain—

Like a child, fever-flush'd,
On its mother's knee ;
All the sick noises hush'd,
In that still sea !

November, 1888.

ETERNAL SILENCE.

BENEATH the dome of night's fleck'd sky,
With up-turn'd face, there stood a sage,
Whose craggy brow shelv'd o'er an eye,
Like th' eagle's ; that undimm'd with age,
Still search'd the stars for a reply !

O realm of bright immensity !
Long time, while here I darkly wander,
For answer, I have waited thee ;
Do they now walk the stars up yonder,
Who walk'd below so pure and free ?

From some, tall cliff appointed me,
I've looked beyond a quiet bay,
Upon the deeper, broader sea,
That round all things by night and day,
Sweeps boundless as eternity.

I've tried to hear its murmuring waves,
Against the sides of phantom sail
That bear each way, 'neath dread concaves,
All souls ; the babe withholds its tale ;
Dead lips are silent as the graves.

I've listen'd, when the spangled sheen
Of th' stars soft-flutter'd on the sea,
As spirits flown from worlds unseen ;
But deeper grew the mystery,
The while the wind blew moist and keen.

One zero night, when off from shore,
A tempest sprang upon the ship,
With teeth of ice, and dreadful roar !
While struggling helpless in its grip,
Men pray'd, who never pray'd before.

Still, o'er those waves afret with pain,
There lay a hush, like death of day,
When sullen night sets up her reign,
Shutting the light of Earth away ;
While endless time roll'd on amain !

I've listen'd, too, among the hills,
With noiseless step, to overhear
Their sage converse, when it distils
In evening dews ; but, far or near,
Heard naught beyond the noisy rills.

E'en when the dead, those hills had strown ;
A harvest moon, then looking down,
On battlements of batter'd stone,
And shatter'd men, without a frown,
Sat speechless, on her silver throne.

I've search'd the world on lonely trips,
And listen'd out thro' earth and air,
To hear the sound of phantom ships ;
But silence met me everywhere,
With finger press'd upon its lips.

'Twixt world and world a curtain falls,
That each from each doth dimly screen ;
Yet, none can hear, thro' the thin walls
That part the seen from the unseen,
A footfall down death's silent halls !

How vain, doth seem man's feeble cry
Amid the silences of space !
To questionings, his midnights try
In nature's ear, from place to place,
Ah me ! no voice doth make reply.

And yet, how calmly, line on line,
All nature, thus, conspires to teach
The way to mould each purpose fine !
Creative art is lost by speech ;
The silent men are half divine.

1887.

BEING IS SEEING.

ROUGH is the way,
Across the wold ;
The hills are gray,
The skies are cold,
When one is sad.

The crown of May,
Is on the wold ;
O'er all the way,
Bend skies of gold,
When one is glad.

And thus, we see
But what we are ;
The verb *To be*,
Life's magic star,
Shines sad, or glad.

1886.

HEREDITY.

BLOOD will tell. Men fly or plod,
From their birth. The gods must then
Be on hand, to make a god ;
Otherwise, we are but men.

Meek and mild is the Pacific,
Pattern of propriety ;
While in sunny isles prolific,
Winsome child of th' Summer Sea!

With a heart of sweet sunshine,
And a hand as kind as fair,
Where she goes abounds the vine,
And the gold glints every where.

Constant to her Southern birth,
She allures the Summer's North ;
And along our Western Earth,
Freely strews her blessings forth.

How unlike the rough Atlantic ;
Monster of heredity !
Wild with passions unromantic ;
Wayward child of the Polar Sea.

Ever true to her Arctic birth ;
As a vixen sullen, shrill,
Where she strolls about the earth,
E'en her breath strikes damp and chill.

She destroys her wondrous child,
Fair Atlantis, jealous notion !
Then, she drowns herself in th' wild,
And the lonely Indian Ocean !

'Tis a law all things proclaim :
Creature birth is destiny ;
Like a torch, it throws a flame
Down each darksome history !

1887.

EQUALITY.

No man is favor'd in his birth,
Above his fellow men.
What seems so, thro' the variant earth,
Is from a want of ken.

The golden sun, for me, doth shine,
And myriad stars arise ;
And fleecy clouds in flocks combine,
On meadows of the skies.

The ocean chafes with anger white,
Or laves the peaceful docks ;
And winds, as zephyrs fly, or smite
The earth until it rocks.

The mountains lift their hooded heads,
Amid the starry skies ;
And forests rear the water-sheds,
Beneath their brimming eyes.

For me, the flowers shed perfume,
And robe in soft attire ;
And babbling brooklets sweetly boom,
To sounds of sylvan lyre.

The birds awake the dewy morn,
And shell with songs my room ;
And bees frequent with mellow horn,
The fragrant clover bloom.

And Heaven, still more rich than earth,
Adds all its bounteous store—
And sweet humanities, whose worth
We value more and more.

Thus, lesser things, like fame and wealth,
I needs but little prize,
That come and go, as if by stealth,
And breed uneasy eyes.

With such resources at command,
Tho' in a shell confin'd,
I'd count myself a king of land,
As infinite as mind !

And these, I share alike with all,
More worth than mints of gold—
Compare'd but ill with things so small—
The character to mould.

'Twas thus, the sage of old could say,
Tuck'd in his tub so slight,
To patronizing king: "You may
But stand from out my light."

The king, charmed with such happy lot,
Replied—intent to please—
“If Alexander I was not,
I'd be Diogenes!”

March, 1889.

PREMONITION.

ALL nature teems with friendly hints,
Of things that are to be ;
Thus thro' the world a shadow glints,
Of larger prophecy.

Ere yet the snow begins to fall,
The pig, within its sty,
Repairs its nest, at the far call
Of tempests in the sky.

The frighten'd steed the sound doth mock,
And frets his knowing head,
Two days, ere yet the earthquake's shock
Hurls cities from their bed.

E'en little birds will southward fly,
Before the Northern blast ;
Or, hide themselves in covert dry,
Till storms are overpast.

But, not alone are brutes endow'd
With this prophetic scent,
That sniffs before the flying cloud,
Each change of element.

How oft, to man on battle eve,
Is coming ill foreknown ;
Of those he loves, he takes his leave,
And falls, as it was shown.

In common life, a phlegm, or ache,
Forwarns of deadly shock ;
Nor ailment comes, man's health to break,
But he doth often mock.

As with a glass, some future day,
The soul, e'en thus, shall spy
Its coming ships, that far away
On stormy offings lie.

June, 1888.

THE TOCSIN OF THE HEART.

A FAIR young child, upon a summer day,
All out of breath, from following the scythe,
Lay down to rest, upon the new-mown hay ;
When up there sprang a lark, that seemed to writhe
From some bad wound, disabling so its wing,
It slowly flutter'd off' across the field !
“ Oh, dear ! ” the lad exclaim'd, “ you poor, sweet thing,
Let me take care of you, till it be heal'd.”
When lo ! a nest of little birds he spies ;
Their golden mouths, all open wide for food.
He thinks to take them home, despite the cries
Of th' mother bird, now warding well her brood !
But, ere his hand has seized the lovely prize,
A ringing voice tells him, to let it be !
The child is sure, it came from out the skies,
And runs to nestle at his mother's knee !
As an alarm, when struck at dead of night,
So, conscience roused, where fateful wrongs upstart,
Doth wildly ring the great storm-bell of right ;
The clanging, clashing tocsin of the heart !

A strong, young man, just from the college halls,
Steps forth upon the street of a busy world ;
When, in his way, a gay companion falls,
And many a lance of mirth and wit is hurl'd—

As often parried by some skillful pass.

Alas! that joy run wild can never last.
The hint is dropp'd, to take a merry glass;

An instant more, his sky is overcast,
As he unbolts the door that leads to death!

With trembling step he hastens now along;
For shame has made him fear his very breath.

Such cowards men become, when doing wrong,
As oft will fly at sound of scratch of pen!

A warning cry rings out: "Touch not, taste not,"
As he doth raise the glass, but drops again,
And panic stricken quickly quits the place!
As an alarm, when struck at dead of night,
So, conscience roused, where fateful wrongs upstart,
Doth wildly ring the great storm-bell of right;
The clanging, clashing tocsin of the heart!

One black, fierce night, beside a merchant's path,
As he was hastening home to wife and child,
There burst a volley of red-throated wrath,
Whose secret seem'd to vanish on the wild!
To th' missing man, no clew could e'en be found.

The mystery was dying fast away,
When lo! a huntsman comes upon a mound;
And near the spot, a mangled body lay.
A letter found, reveal'd the dark affair.

'Twas shame and hunger prompted first the deed;
Still, dread misgivings pluck'd him by the hair,
That had prevail'd, but for his bitter need!

Its cost, one twitch of nerve ; the death flash burst ;

But so, an echo woke within the air,
Whose frenzied peal grew louder than at first ;
Its clang and clatter drove him to despair !
As an alarm, when struck at dead of night,
So, conscience roused, where fateful wrongs upstart,
Doth wildly ring the great storm-bell of right ;
The clanging, clashing tocsin of the heart !

An old man lies upon his bed of death ;

His hair unkempt, and white as driven snow ;
His pulse-beat muffled sore, fitful his breath ;

O, proud was once that form, there fallen low !
When suddenly, he starts up with a cry ;

“ Did ye not hear that bell strike an alarm,
So loud it shakes the earth and rends the sky ?

Like a death-tick by night, it bodes me harm !
Once I refused its warning sound to hear.

Long years have pass'd, as silent since as doom ;
While every vermin was allow'd to breed

Inside the belfry tow'r, begrim'd with gloom !
Ah me ! but how the steeple rocks to night.

The storm winds thro' its moss-grown crannies roar,
While black-wing'd rooks scream wildly with affright ;
Each vengeful thunder louder than before ! ”

As an alarm, when struck at dead of night,
So, conscience roused, where fateful wrongs upstart,
Doth wildly ring the great storm-bell of right ;
The clanging, clashing tocsin of the heart !

1887.

LATENT FORCES.

OFT doth the heart love's secret keep,
Long cased in friendship's tiny shell;
As summer songs in rosebuds sleep,
Till waken'd by the early robin's spell.

An instant glance, an Eden blooms;
So rich in joys, till then, unknown,
Of bower'd walks, and sweet perfumes,
All former life doth seem, with weeds o'ergrown.

Unnumber'd powers thus slumber mute,
All up and down the peopled lands;
As music in a quiet lute,
That wakens 'neath the touch of master hands.

On man's slow growth, the ages wait,
Envelop'd still in fruitless shade.
Some day, he'll tongue e'en voiceless fate,
And the Eternal Silences invade!

April 1887.

THE REALM OF MYSTERY.

THERE is a place, we dimly guess,
A realm, remote from anywhere ;
Beyond whose rim, no world doth press
The pulseless bosom, black and bare,
Of stark, eternal nothingness !

That void abyss of empty space,
Each ray of light doth backward fling ;
Till lifting high a craggy face,
No spectre sound on airy wing
Doth ever fly the desert place !

So, just beyond the border land,
Where walks the mind 'mid stars of truth,
An awful gulf yawns close at hand,
With lips clean cut and sharp, forsooth,
As precipice, that juts the strand.

Down that abyss no eye can look,
Where chaos rolls in seas of ink !
Its empty waves for ghosts mistook—
So formless they, 'twere vain to think
Of caging them inside a book.

No shadow e'en, that void doth throw,
Nor air for thought to beat its wing;
With nothing like to what we know,
We never can one secret wring
From its seal'd lips, but as we grow.

1887.

SUCCESS.

NONE need complain. No spot, on earth,
Is destitute of means to rise.
What feet have trod the lowly hearth,
And learn'd, e'en there, to scale the skies !
By doing well some humble task,
They fitted grew for larger things :
And rising so, they did but bask
In native air, on wonted wings.

This, genius is—unerring sign,
However traced by pen or sword
On human lives, of gift divine.
O'er common men, he is sole lord,
Who boasts not much, nor counts his time—
So lost is he in one great spell
The while ; yet, not for praise sublime,
But, that of doing all things well !

This is success. The maiden fair,
Who soils her hands with toils to please,
And keeps the scars—their only share,
That earn white hands a jewel'd ease—
When cross'd at last upon her breast,
Man's highest goal has greatly won ;
The perfect pearl of God's own " bless'd "—
That golden word, of work well-done !

1887.

THE PERI'S SONG.

"I WILL not set my foot in Paradise,
So long as but one soul is barr'd outside."
'Twas thus, a Peri sang, whose fame was wide
On earth, averting his tear-brimming eyes.
And thence, the tender sonnet northward flies,
As some sweet song-bird of the sunny south.
But soon, the old love-tone dies in its mouth ;
And the blithe stranger droop'd 'neath cloudy skies.
And so, it mused upon a stormy day ;
"How anything but wise, it needs would be,
Did e'er my strength come back again to me,
Still here to sit, and sigh ; and not away
To summer climes, beyond the chilling sea,
Because, some birds will haunt this winter tree."

December 19, 1888.

PERTURBATION.

IN th' early dawn of human thought,
Wise men suppos'd our earth alone
From primal chaos had been wrought;
God's finish'd work, the jewel of his throne.

At length they mark'd, as walk'd the queen
Alone, that she was oft perturb'd:
As a maiden shy, approach'd unseen
By th' other sex, will strangely be disturb'd.

Attending her such times, 'twas found
That worlds, more vast than is our own,
Approach the earth on her annual round;
Just as the far kenn'd fact had duly shown

Thus man, perturb'd in his earthly course,
Doth surely know, a heavenly world
Deflects him so; such moral force
Is in each dew-drop pack'd, and rose-bud curl'd.

1887.

ETERNAL VERITIES.

Now, when our age
To ruin's vortex drifting,
The old-time creed is sifting,
And doubting is accounted sage ;
In God's great name—
When shackles for our brains are forging,
And men like brutes are gorging ;
For very shame—
Now, let us think, while yet there's time ;
Indifference is crime.

Why should I embark
In the dark,
On the sea
Of a vain philosophy?
Driven of the wind and toss'd,
Every landmark vex'd and cross'd
By the whelming waves of doubt ;
Reason, conscience, all things lost,
As unworthy trust !

Ah, such the cost,
Of venturing on the skeptic's route,

With naught but broken spar,
Of vessel wreck'd afar,
For want of guiding star ;
While black distrust of all without,
Hangs friendless skies o'er head ;
Within, a heavy, hungry heart,
Whose lips life's waters chap and smart ;
Around, the billows break and part,
O'er awful caverns of the dead !

Fool, fool were I !
Such vague uncertainties to try ;
When I may plant my feet,
'Mid flowers angel sweet,
On the eternal hills,
Truth buttress'd ; strong as right
And purity, both marble white ;
From whose deep seams gush living rills,
For man's soul-want, a fit supply ;
While vapors rise, and showers descend,
Where songs and sunshine blend ;
And cosmic forces, without end,
Conspire, me, aid to lend,
And nurse upon the bosom of the sky !
O ! why should I incline to roam ?
Since all beneath God's starry dome,
My being finds itself at home.

1888.

AT HOME.

WHO finds his other self, in Nature framed—
His words, and works, and wants, all clearly nam'd,
And thus, before his birth, long ages famed—
Thenceforth, for aye, beneath the starry dome,
Where e'er his footsteps roam,
He is at home.

His thoughts their brothers find, in stars and mains,
In birds and brooks, monsoons and mountain chains;
That each, to him, his thinking self explains—
Reveals the wonders of his inner state,
In types that illustrate,
Just like a mate.

His hopes find sisters sweet, in fruits and flowers,
In bulbs and buds, cocoons and sunny hours.
Each form of beauty talks but of his powers,
With all a sister's love and a sister's pride,
That knows, what faults to chide,
And what to hide.

E'en should his lot be cast in a wilderness,
With but a friendly rock; he'll clothe and dress
The fields with verdure, and with harvests bless;
Or, build to his own taste, a city of thought,
That kings, in vain, have sought,
In marble wrought.

If thro' some chance mishap, that none can tell,
By th' angel Death, he e'en were sent to hell;
His voice of bold reform, clear as a bell,
Would call lost souls from evil still away;
And finding grief to allay,
Beg there to stay.

April, 1888.

THE EVERLASTING GATES.

THE world of childhood is but small,
And floats about in narrow straits.
An inglenook, a little stall;
Each path confronts a massive wall
Of ignorance, with mighty grates
So seem the everlasting gates.

Unyielding, as the mountain's side
Assail'd by th' tempest's awful din,
What multitudes those gates have tried!
What multitudes, before them died!
Who strove to force them down and in;
The way, that leads to self and sin.

While, each ascending step of life
Doth outward lead, o'er faults and hates,
Thro' culture, won by toil and strife,
The care of child, or love of wife;
And opens everlasting gates,
Where some new world the vision waits.

As many worlds attend the way
Of every man, as there are spheres
Of knowledge, brighter than the day,
That he has enter'd. Twilight gray
Reveals their presence thro' his tears;
In darkness best his state appears!

Such worlds a man may multiply,
As dewdrops on the skirts of night,
Or stars, that stud the boundless sky ;
So thick, God's truths about him lie !
And every one he learns aright,
Becomes to him an orb of light.

Behold the man of shining face !
Who wisdom here with virtue mates ;
E'en down the track of endless space,
He sweeps along with matchless grace,
Wide thro' the everlasting gates,
Where world on world his vision waits !

September, 1888.

UNDERTOW.

WAVE after wave beats in upon the shore,
Day out, day in, thro' all the year ;
With gentle ripple when the sky is clear,
With awful thunder when the day is drear ;
In and in, forever more !

O'er all the seas, the landward currents flow,
Pursued by tempests far upon the beach ;
That soon the fertile lands would over-reach,
And strand gray commerce on the rocks to bleach,
But for ample undertow.

From other seas, like stealthy currents creep,
Toward the happy shores, whereon we stand ;
Whose great white teeth the watery worlds command,
And angry growl bodes ruin to the land,
Where the patriot sires sleep.

Yet, all the while, unnoted and unseen,
Strong undercurrents flow the other way,
Bearing bedlam and chaos, gone astray,
Into transforming deeps, whose gentle spray
Keeps the nation fresh and green.

And thus, how oft we wade in seas of trouble,
Whose wrathful billows part us from a friend;
And nothing seems our fortune to amend,
And naught could here such sorrows ever end,
Were life currents not all double!

An undertow sweeps out from every shore,
Resistless, steady, as the ocean tide;
That bears us all within its bosom wide,
Where love and trust eternally abide;
Out and out forever more!

December, 1887.

THE NEW NIAGARA.

A MIGHTY flood, a seething cataract,
Whose sound is like a falling sea;
A new Niagara proclaims the fact,
The Continent to man is free!

From Russia drear to sunny Italy,
The bursting water-sheds of wrong,
A turbid ocean of humanity,
Thro' Castle Garden pours along.

The world has never seen the like before!
A chain-cascade of living souls
From all the earth, with ceaseless, broken roar,
Across our bounds at flood-tide rolls.

The Mighty God rides down the steeps of time!
And where his chariot ruts the height,
The flood in moral grandeur sweeps sublime!
Let us aside and see the sight.

Of old, the dusky Moor, and vandal Goth,
With flashing sword, and flaming brand,
Burst thro' the gates, and spread, with hunger wroth,
Red ruin o'er the Father-land.

Not so, this flood, whose spray beclouds our skies ;
'Tis moving forward, at the sound
Of God's thrice voiced command in Paradise ;
"Go forth, ye men, and till the ground."

Nor does its coming swift destruction bode ;
As when of old from pole to pole,
O'er fallen kings, the haughty Persian rode,
To vanish like a wither'd scroll.

The floods, that to our soil old wrongs consign,
Are soon absorb'd, like rain and snow.
Thus still, our charter reads, e'en line for line,
Fair as a hundred years ago.

The emigrant may fret and chafe ; his child
Will know no land beyond the sea.
Thus, tyrant wrongs, that age on age have piled,
Here melt away from memory.

Then, O, my countrymen ! shun false alarms.
What tho' the falls do fret and foam ?
A league below, they bathe the feet of quiet farms ;
So, on to their eternal home.

A grand design our land in nature shows,
That as new mother, nothing less,
She should be born as sweetly as the rose,
A fainting earth to soothe and bless.

As from the first, let not her welcome word,
To man as man, be e'er withdrawn ;
Thus, speed the age of gold, so long deferr'd,
Of which, as yet, it is but dawn.

September, 1888.

THE SLAVE SHIPS.

"SEE yon slave ships! See yon slave ships!"

A cry down the harbor rang;
But not the same, with trembling lips,
That the poet Whittier sang.⁴

Those fatal barks bore ghastly marks;
Built by night with plunder red,
Each nail a curse; while greedy sharks,
In their wake, on black men fed!

For whiter sail ne'er rode a gale,
Than o'erspreads these swanlike ships;
As in and out, their flags we hail,
On the round of flying trips.

A mission band, or Bible stand,
Graces oft a sunny deck;
Nor man is seen with fetter'd hand,
Or iron chain about his neck.

But in each hold, a hundred fold
Worse distress is packed in store;
Enslaving rum, with woes untold,
For exchange on Congo's shore!

O ! what are chains, whose galling pains
But oppress man's mortal frame,
Compar'd with this, that fetters brains,
Reason gyves till bent and tame ?

So speed the ships on world-wide trips,
From the ports of Christian lands,
With liquid thrall, that easy slips
On the soul, its servile bands.

From bad to worse, the awful curse
Is agrowth with wrath and pain,
To smite the land, that fats its purse,
On the blood of heathen slain !

March, 1838.

THE LEGEND OF THE PINES.

FAR back, in ages when the waters spawn'd
Huge monsters; ere the morn of man had dawn'd,
Upon the world; the ocean roll'd and press'd
Against the yielding sands its mighty breast;
It swept their golden masses into hills.

That shone like fields of daffodils;
It hollow'd them in dales,
Where sported shoals of whales;
And as it work'd, in grand, full tones it sang;
"This is God's will; and this," the echo rang,
As onward, upward, moved the sands,
Far out along the watery strands.

Thus, working, singing,
The welkin ringing,
As down the grooves of Time long cycles spun,
The ocean's work, among the sands was done.

Then, came a lull;
With here and there, a lonely gull,
Such as presage the coming storm.
On wildest wings, its bodeful form
Swept down upon the crested waves,
And shriek'd amid their wrathful caves,
And toss'd the foam far up in air,

To melt in mists, that floated there
Like angel hair,
About the face of sunrise fair.

The storm had pass'd.
The night of ages could not last.
The winds subsided with a moan,
And ocean voices sang alone.
There lay the sands compos'd and still,
In hollow vale and shining hill;
All listening in their listless way,
To what the waves might have to say.
At last, a voice came near and spake :
"Farewell," it said, as if its heart would break !
"We go the way none e'er return,
Nor ever shall, O grief! discern
The end, for which we toiled and died."
And as the far receding tide,
Ebbing into the ocean wide,
Still faintly rose and fell,
It sobb'd, "Farewell, farewell."

Then, from the sands, broke forth the prayer;
"Oh! leave us not in mute despair,
Or, here we lie
Beneath Time's scorching eye,
Without a motion, or a sound,
While th' seasons swing their round;
Still longing, listening for the sea,
To all eternity ;

With no soft wind, our burning cheeks to fan,
And sing us all, since time began,
As part of the Eternal Plan."

The distant ocean broke the spell
Once more, as with a liquid bell,
It chim'd a last farewell.

Just then, an angel swept across the strand,
Trailing soft wings, like clouds, along the glistening sand;
And this, the song it sweetly sang,
Till heaven and earth, like silver rang;

"No seed of toil is sown in earth,
But blossoms soon or late;
'Tis ours to watch, and give it birth;
Be patient then, and wait."

The sounding sea, so sobb'd itself to rest,
Upon the bosom of its mother breast.
The shining sands in masses lay,
Still quiv'ring 'neath the eye of day.
At last, they felt a stir,
The bursting of a burr,
And something green appear'd. The years flew by,
And it grew up and up toward the sky.
One day a wind swept inland from the seas;
It linger'd in the branches of the trees,
And sway'd them to and fro,
As slipper'd feet to music go!

"The voice has come," they cried;

"Just hear the roaring tide!

The very soul of all the seas,
Forever lives in pine-wood trees."

As sea-shells sing their ocean home,
And in their tones, a lisp of foam
We hear, tho' inland far they roam;
So pine-trees sing eternally;
Their songs are always of the sea.
In church-yards lone, or forests wide,
You hear the roaring, rolling tide,
In accents pungent, as supernal;
It is their work for the Eternal;

Thus toil, that beautifies the earth,
Like truth, is of immortal birth;
And thro' all change doth reappear,
In songs the angels list to hear.

September, 1888.

THE OLDEST PSALM OF LIFE.

AMID the whirl of our fast age,
When making money is the rage,
And modest worth sits oft forlorn ;
The Psalm of Job comes fresh and clear,
With tidings from life's dewy morn,
Our heated world hath need to hear.
Still, as of old, to trouble born,
Man's life is hedg'd with briar and thorn ;
And as we press each cruel sting,
His voice to us on key divine,
Ideal life doth fitly sing,
In Orient verse, like sparkling wine.
When friends forsake, and fortunes fail,
And evil doth our good assail ;
Then, we must meet the cynic scorn,
Of merit based on selfishness,
By showing how, tho' bleeding, torn,
Our virtue thrives upon distress.
When justice seems with error blind,
And mercy is itself unkind ;
Still, we must face the angry crowd,
With wrath ablaze in fearless awe ;
Or, stand among the priestly proud,
And Him discourse, whose word is law.

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Still must we trust a silent God,
While sapient men pronounce us odd ;
 E'en tho' our harps be turn'd to mourning,
Our sweet voiced pipes to notes of grief,
 And our good name, without a warning,
Steal from us noiseless as a thief.

What tho' our days, swift as a post
Here troop us by ; and all that most
 We prize prove false ! like heroes then,
We still shall strive to reach the goal ;
 Or falling, hope to live again,
Like him of old, a deathless soul.

To know the meaning of earth's pain,
How sunshine cometh after rain ;
 Turn, friend, to Job's great Psalm of Life,
And learn what's oft misunderstood ;
 With patience equal to the strife,
All present ill is future good.

December, 1887.

OVER AND OVER.

REPETITION is the rule of life ;
Nothing here is settled, nothing fast.
All new ground is won by endless strife ;
Meantime nothing done will always last.

Thus the floods ascend on silver wings,
To adorn the rosy twilight skies ;
And descend, again, to swell the springs
Twenty times, ere yet the season flies.

Thro' the gates of flame the sun returns
With unwearied morn ; his course fulfills
In appointed time, and chariot burns,
On the altar of the western hills.

As soon as a room is fairly swept,
Dust begins to gather there again ;
And, o'er all the house that's neatly kept,
Everything takes up the same refrain.

Thus, to keep the garden fresh and neat
It must be till'd over still and over ;
And to keep the pastures fresh and sweet,
They must be, as often sown in clover.

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E'en the law, we make, is for to-day,
And must be remodel'd by to-morrow.
Living words, we are the first to say,
Age on age of us will often borrow.

Over thus, and over, round and round
All things move; envelop'd thick in sheen,
As it sweeps along with deafening sound,
Spins the world adown deep grooved routine.

Over still, and over; 'tis the only way
Of perfection. So, do not repine;
What if, twenty times, you needs must lay
On the anvil, work, to shape it fine!

April, 1888.

PERSISTENT EFFORT.

STEP by step, the heights are won,
That seem so wondrous fair ;
Stroke by stroke, the task is done,
That fill'd us with despair.

Hands, that teach to ivory keys,
The trick of human tears,
Found their touch of graceful ease,
By drumming, weary years.

Fluent lips, that drop rich pearls,
In Wisdom's storied urn,
Sack'd the mines of classic worlds
Where midnight tapers burn.

Poet pens, that glide with ease,
As grace and truth inspire,
E'en were wrought, on bended knees,
At toil's hot altar fire.

The address and self control,
That make a life complete,
Are red trophies of the soul,
From conquest and defeat.

Thus, there is no wondrous worth,
In heart or mind or tongue,
But, from lowly, common birth,
By tireless effort sprung.

1886.

A DISTINCTION WITHOUT A DIFFERENCE.

WHEN a gang of stealthy men,
Creeping from some secret den,
Trap a merchant, that they may,
"Operate on him," they say ;
 Pick his purse, with fingers deft,
Trusting to a run of luck,
For the pay of so much pluck ;
 Then, the venture is a "theft !"

When a set of wealthy men,
Trap a trade in some dark pen,
That they may—how very good !
Operate in staple food,
 And for pay, with greedy lust,
Millions wrest from common weal,
By one turn of fortunes wheel ;
 Then, the venture is a "trust."

November, 1888.

ROOM AT THE TOP.

FROM th' pillow of the dreaming youth,
Fame's ladder mounts to the sky ;
To occupy its lower rounds,
What crowds with crowds, eager vie !

Aloft, beyond the middle way,
And here and there, still, is one
With buoyant heart and bounding step,
His eagle eye on the sun.

From up the heights the word resounds,
Thro' out the school and the shop,
To fire the blood of youth and hope,
There is still room, at the top !

The lives of those who have achiev'd
The higher rounds, tho' but few,
Assure us well, who follow them,
What man has done, man can do.

So, courage all, and upward press ;
Each round you make, draw the belt
Another notch, then, stand erect,
And plant your feet, where you knelt.

Thus, for some younger brother, we
May clear a space, on the round,
That he must mount, who else had stood
Thro' all his life, on the ground.

1888.

INFLUENCE.

How oft we swing a careless hand,
Nor stop to think, that in the air
A movement starts, whose circling waves
Beat outward, till the utmost caves
Of th' wind are stirr'd ; and sea and land
Have felt the motion everywhere !

About us hangs the atmosphere
Of influence. The word we speak,
With idle breath, sounds thro' and thro'
Life's mystic air. As false or true,
It stirs the strong to persevere,
Or disconcerts the struggling weak.

No man can live to self alone.
The race is one, from first to last ;
A common blood flows in our veins,
And impulse with the ages gains,
That shapes man's ends, to virtue grown
Or pamper'd vice, from all the past.

1886.

KNIGHTS OF LABOR.

In the far off times, when the earth was young,
And the dews all day to the blossoms clung
 'Neath the blue, bright sky ;
For a woman's love, or a neighbor's land,
Then the chivalrous knight, with his steel-gloved hand,
 Was prepared to die.

How the heart beats quick, as we think of those days,
And our red lips speak the patrician's praise,
 As a bygone race !
Yet, as spring fresh flowers from a deep, rich mould,
So a new race springs, that will challenge the old
 In heroic grace.

With his lever in hand, how the engineer,
Facing danger, still like a cavalier
 Rushes on to death,
With a firm resolve ! Nor train speeding nigh,
Doth make even one of a thousand to fly
 The hot boiler's breath !

No crusade for glory in passionate strife,
Doth inspire the courage to risk his life,
 For the lives in his care ;
But a quiet heart, as a maiden's, shy,
That where duty calls will look death in the eye,
 By the breadth of a hair !

'Tis the trait that graces the knight of to-day,
And is more and more the American way,
Pride of rank to spoil.
For what makes a knight, but a hero mind,
That is shown in actions courageous and kind,
That entitle toil?

As the olden knights, of the iron creed,
That renown is won by the noble deed,
We applaud to day;
So the knights of labor, may build to fame
Such a fane of honor, their chivalrous name
Will endure alway!

June, 1888.

THERE'S SAFETY IN LIGHT.

OH, deep were the shadows that lay on the street ;
For the fast waning moon linger'd low in the East,
When the lumbering stage, all its horses aheat,
Drew up at the inn of the city Miniest.

Like spectres, the rows of tall poplars there stood,
Above all the windows with shutters enclos'd ;
For the night was alive with a villainous brood,
As soon as the city in slumber repos'd.

Light floods all the streets and reflects on the clouds,
As the Lightning Express flashes into Miniest,
And the fast waning moon glances down on the crowds,
A veil on her face as she climbs up the East.

Like suns burn the lamps that will never go out,
Down long lines of stores where no shutter appears!
E'en angels in white are there flitting about
In safety, for virtue has banish'd all fears.

O, heart sore beset, with the imps of despair !
Some error, know thou, hath bedarken'd thy sight,
And serves as a screen where they make them a lair ;
Take down all the shutters and turn on the light !

The false, it is dark, and doth prejudice breed,
And every vile thing, that still walks in the night
On other's good fortunes to surfeit its greed;
And fearing reproof will not come to the light.

The truth, it is light—'tis the father of day,
Whose children are all the fair offspring of right,
That as wardens of earth, watch over man's way;
And rejoicing in love flood his path with the light.

1887.

TWICE TWO ARE FOUR.

I KNOW that two and two are four ;
 An earth-worn fact, still not amiss
In any world, on any shore ;
 A *universe* is pledge of this.

As traveling far, in regions strange,
 All earthly scenes may wax and wane,
But sun, or star doth never change ;
 So, reason, truth and God, remain.

On such high grounds, I set my feet,
 And lo ! my head among the stars.
A vision grand, bursts full, complete ;
 I see beyond time's golden bars !

All law thro' nature doth extend.
 As here, one end with matter deals,
With spirit, there, the other end ;
 Or sun, or soul, one impulse feels !

So clear it is, twice two are four,
 In Heaven above, as earth below ;
My thought thereon, doth upward soar,
 ' Till Heaven itself I come to know !

1887.

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

THE words, we use, are pictures to the mind ;
And some, their meanings on the surface wear,
Like simple paintings of the Chinese kind ;
While others have great vistas wrought in them,
Down which the mind may wander thro' the years,
And dream its life away! so deep, are they,
With lights and shadows, human smiles and tears!

Who asks, but whether two and two make four,
Needs not consult the history of the race.
But, if he ask the worth of liberty,
Enlightenment, and home, he needs must trace
Them in the long experience of mankind,
To shape an answer, that where'er it pass,
With eyes of flame and words of fire, shall like
Crusading hermit, e'en compel the mass
To think and march at its behest ; he must
Submit to wander round in many lands,
Some thousand years in quest of witnesses ;
Call here on sovereigns, there on robber bands ;
Consult with martyrs, patriots and saints ;
Explore the gloom of ignorance ; sit down
In halls with wisdom graced, and there discourse
Philosophy with thinkers of renown ;
Be doom'd to dungeons and familiar grow

With bolts and locks and heavy chains ; thence flee
Into the air of freedom, and imbibe
The breeze, that wanders unconfin'd from sea
To sea ; and light his torch full at the sun,
That o'er broad lands shines not upon a slave ;
E'en thus, at last, his world-wide wanderings done,
He shall return, and, with reflectant words,
Declare that liberty, and light, and love,
Are nothing less than suns, which sweetly shine
In heavens, that ageless arch man's path above !

'Tis thus, we learn the price of truth. One may
Not voice o'er it such words, as two and two
Are four, or test it by some rigid rule
Of demonstration ; but, from things both new
And old in life, we learn how all confess
That actions must be class'd, or right or wrong,
As wrought in truth or falsehood. What is done
In truth, appears always ennobling, strong ;
The word of pow'r, but for whose undergirth
The universe would sink ; and so contains
The elements of man's well-being, worth,
And all the onward steps in time he gains !
Its evidence is its necessity.
What man can do without, and prosper well
For long, is not the truth. A primal part
Of his constituent nature, it doth spell
Each want man feels from faintest alphabet.
E'en when we learn it first, it seems as tho'
We but recall'd it, then, to memory !

Self-witnessing in every man ; we know
Its voice, and cannot hide but where it finds
Us out.

The trend of truth is thus, to make
A man the more a man ; to make him more
Humane ; his powers of mind and heart, to wake
In loving helpfulness for all mankind.
And so, we read : " The truth shall make you free."
What does not make men free, e'en large of heart,
And clean of hand, and broad of mind, we see
Is not the truth. Where narrowness prevails,
And prejudice is shown, there error lurks ;
For ill of any kind doth not result
From good. Thus, every thing that progress works
In man, comes from compliance with the truth,
Howe'er reveal'd, on ancient parchment writ,
Or, on the inner lining of man's soul.
For God's commands are man's demands, and fit
His utmost need. This is the word, that was
And is and shall forever be, without
The shadow of a turning ; as with no
Beginning, and no end, in all its route.

So, man remain'd a slave, until the truth
Appear'd to him. At first, in faintest gleams
It pierced his mind, like rays of light thro' doors
Well weather-worn, and fell upon his dreams,
And softest visions gave of liberty.
The right divine of king, as well, of priest,

Was a pretense! The truth lay in the thought,
That freedom is innate; and from the least
To greatest, every child of God is born
Enrob'd to offer sacrifice! So too,
A hammer made of stone, and copper knife,
Were mere makeshifts, and each of falsehood grew.
The real thing lay in utensils made
Of iron and steel. The culture of the soil,
Of old, was thus so false to Nature's law
In use of means, that hard as man might toil,
Oft, famine after famine came and went
With gaunt, terrific strides, as penalty
Of some great, agricultural lie! To sire
The navigation of the seas, canoes,
Dug from a log, and slowly row'd along
With single oar, a simulation was
In art; and so, earth's commerce now so strong
And fleet, the coming of the mighty sail
Had long to wait, as for the iron horse
With heart of fire invincible; when up
There sprang, as fountains from some ocean source,
The maritime metropolis along
All shores!

'Tis thus, that progress comes alone
By breaking with the false, and discovery
And practice of the true. Thus too, 'tis shown
All ruin comes, from the untimely death
Of flowers, to a nation's bloody fall.
In every case, the individual has
Been false to Being's law. The broken wall,

The barren land, the buried monument,
The perish'd scroll, the hooting of the owl
In long deserted palaces; the night
Now hideous with the fierce hyena's growl,
Where once the song of lovely maidens toyed
With all the dove-like stillness, show us well,
What is that lake of fire in which are cast
The nations, that forget their God, the hell,
From which obedience to some civic truth
Would e'en have saved the cities of the past;
And Athens, Carthage, Thebes would stand to-day,
With splendors crown'd, a hundred fold more vast
Than in days of their renown; and still,
The truth thus served, would toss its prophecy
Far onward, to an ever prospering goal,
That lies, as yet, in dim futurity.

The world is slow to learn what ruin means.
A building burn'd, a broken bridge, at last,
Are but its other names for hell! all point
Alike the destiny, fulfilling fast,
Of nations and of men that stifle truth—
The fearful vengeance of a broken law!
Thus, everywhere, in commerce, politics,
A martyr'd president is but the straw,
That shows the way the wind doth blow! And so
Of trusts, monopolies, and stolen wealth
Secure, and rage for senate millionaires
Enacting laws by which the social health
Is suck'd from out the state, its conscience shrunk

To leathern pouch in which the party's spoils
To bag; as with intimidation vile,
Or brutal bribery, practis'd without shame
Before the open polls; till naught is left,
But skeletons of men half clothed in bloody rags;
Fierce anarchists, made such by anarchists
Who hold for self the nation's money bags!

From every hell of ruin anywhere,
Or here or after here, the truth alone
Is man's salvation. Race and climate, it
Has none, nor nationality. Unknown,
At first on earth, it conquers by and by
All prejudice—the barriers of all creeds
And continents, and makes its home
With universal man. Its only need
To be discover'd once, and never thence
Can it be dropp'd from the world's history.
Whether a nation live by truth, or die
By falsehood; still, to immortality
The lesson of its life is pass'd along.
As it descends thro' time from state to states,
From monarchy to commonwealth, its light
Is never lost, its courage ne'er abates.
Or soon or late, philosophers arise
Its meaning to explain; and then, along
Come advocates in its defense; its praise
Is sounded forth by orators; the song
Of poets with its beauty is inspired;
Free institutions body forth its life.

So Grotius first proclaim'd the truth ; " Free ships
Should make free goods." A long and bloody strife
Ensued in which it seem'd forgotten quite,
Till Bolingbroke espous'd the thoughts anew
In England ; Frederick of Prussia then
Became its champion ; and like the dew
It fell at last on all the continent
Of Europe, and America awoke
To give it triumph !

As no accident
Of time or place can change the primal stroke
That shapes Creation, and decrees all things
Their destiny ; so, truth remains the same
To-day and yesterday and evermore.
It may be scourg'd or given to the flame,
Beheaded, hang'd or crucifi'd ; and yet,
It lives unharm'd ; and tho' its workers change,
The work itself goes on. A franchis'd lie
Is still a slave, with all the Earth for range ;
While truth in bonds, a freeman is, atail
In cotton fields ; for, all the time, we see
The lie is on the way to servitude,
While truth is on the way to liberty !
Love, justice, mercy, these 'twixt man and man
Are all imperishable. No sea can drown,
No wind can wreck, no sword can slay, no rock
Can crush, no foot of tyrant trample down
A thing of such essential nature as
The truth ; the ornament of all the race,

And pearl which may not be compared with gold,
And all the gems with which the spring doth grace
Earth's dewy morn.

In this, its worth appears ;
It is not made by human workmanship,
Nor is it found among the stones, that line
The streets where tramp the multitudes. No trip
Thro' farthest Earth reveals the place where it
Is mined. It must be bought, if had at all,
At greatest price ; secured by noblest toil
And sacrifice ; by efforts, that forestall
The hope of indolence.

Such is the path
The truth must tread, upon its way to man ;
The bigots hate its new attire and hiss
While it is passing by ; the lewd first scan
Its robes, then, laugh, because it negatives
What long has pass'd for law ; the simple fail
To see the very essence of the truth
Is movement, so, the waning times bewail !
The prophet only sees, or poet or
Philosopher, the function of the new,
And finds its waiting place is in the van
Of progress ; still, the crowds with stones pursue,
With whom the yielding of the old is like
Sinking the Universe !

The growth of Man
Is an accepted fact. No fancy here

Our song with foam-bells wreathes; it is God's plan,
Our earth and heavens to renew. For see!
From savages, who dwelt in cheerless caves,
Or ambled in canoes, to men, who build
The steamers that outride the ocean's waves,
And palace homes, 'mid garden walks, what heights
The race has scaled! From swiftest footed post,
Sent o'er the heather hills of Rhoderick Dhu,
To bear the flaming cross, that call'd the host
Of highland clans to battle; to the telegraph,
That o'er a vast highway of crosses speeds
The flashing messages of peace or war,
As fast as lightnings wing'd with fire, what deeds
Of daring have been chronicled in time,
And numberless discoveries made; each one
Of which, was bought at a great price!

That man

Is o'er all institutions, as the sun
Above the earth, is common truth to-day.
But what a price it cost the race! A strange,
New thought, it came to glimmer in the minds
At first, of a few, musing men. Its range
To dreamers is confin'd, who, turning inward
The strength of all their glances, smile to see
Its bashful beauty. But, ere long, the smile
Has fled; and on their brows, as when on tree
And hill descends the darkening mist, a sadness
Soon settles down, while pond'ring how the race
Must water well the ground for each new plant

With tears and blood, ere it will grow to grace
The garden of mankind. And thus, they think
To keep it secret for awhile. It burns
Its way, like fire, to light. They nurse it close
At home, and to the few that it concerns
They make it known. And yet, despite their ward,
In th' fulness of the times, it comes of age.
It wrestles now with the despotic church ;
And lo ! ecclesiasticism, in rage
Recoils before its stern, resistless might !
What millions it inspires ! What martyr flames
It lights ! What institutions it rebuilds !
At length beneath the ban of hateful names,
Men see its application to the state.
It wrestles with despotic kings, and one
By one, they feel their sceptres broken short,
Their thrones o'erturn'd, while revolutions run
From land to land. In Holland, England, France,
America, they follow thick and fast,
Until the world with its new light is all
Ablaze !

To buy this truth from first to last,
Vast armies were expended ; tears and treasures
In costly barter flow'd like mountain streams.
The Stuart said : " It shall not cross the seas
Of England ; " but, scouting all his dreams,
It crossed the Stuart's neck, and from its soil
His children drove. The rough, Atlantic main
It crossed, to wage the war of Revolution,

And wrest the continent from France and Spain.
How great the price! and yet its real worth
Is more than what it cost. None ever say,
"We paid too dear for truth." For now, behold!
The glory of our land, that yesterday
Was frightful with wild beasts and wilder men,
Abloom with thoughts of church and state, whose seed
With downy ballots wing'd, are wafted o'er
The world; and from each soil, the ancient need
Of man is being well supplied. And lo!
The forty states, and sixty million free
And happy people, that have since upgrown
Beneath the shelter of a single tree!

Of all religious truth, the church has preach'd
The world familiar with the cost. And well,
It may thus boast its blood-bought eminence,
Isaiah, Paul—but, time would fail to tell
The names imperishable, that challenge here
The admiration of the world. And yet,
The cost of truth of every kind has been
No less. The thinking world cannot forget,
That thus a Bruno braved a suffering life,
And e'en was burn'd a martyr at the stake,
Because the Heliocentric Theory
He taught; nor yet, the answer he doth make
The Inquisition; "Perhaps with greater fear
It is, that ye this sentence pass on me,
Than I receive it." Science too, relates
How, in its war the mind of man to free,

A Galileo pass'd his precious life
In prisonments. And when, at last, he sank
Beneath his cruel lot, infirm with age,
And blind and deaf from dungeons dark and damp—
Bereft of fortune and of friends, he was
Denied a decent burial! It can tell
Of a lov'd Tycho, born in affluence,
Who for the witness of this truth, e'en fell
Beneath a like, hard fate; the towering walls
Of his observatory used to rear
An out-house! In the service of the same
Undying truth, devoted Kepler, dear
To Science, still endured the martyr's doom.
For it, he came to be a man of sorrows
And was oppress'd with grief. Enough, that from
Such lives our brilliant age its lustre borrows!
Thus, as the trials of Copernicus,
Its famed discover, we read, and then,
Of Brutus' tortures; Galileo's woes;
Of Tycho's injuries, and Kepler's; men,
But foremost of the great apostles named,
Of one so simple truth, as that the earth
Does move; we come alone to estimate
The awful throes that gave Creation birth!

For every truth, that lives and shines to-day,
To star the boundless sky of human thought,
Has had its Myriad Martyrs in the past;
And out of blood and tears and toils was wrought
By solitary men; men gather'd from

Their lone communings with the sea, the sand,
The mountains and the sky; men who oft heard
At midnight, messages that e'en would stand
The hair on end; men who were often wet
As with the dews of night, and girt about
With demons of the wilderness; men who,
Like leaves, all up and down, and in and out,
Before the angry passions of the world
Were tossed; men who, on lion-hunted trees,
Oft spent their nights and slept and dream'd amid
Their angry roar; men who, thro' the Dead Seas
Of earth's neglect, long waded to and fro,
And ghostlike haunted all their gloomy caves;
Men who e'en drank the melted snow and ice,
Of a cold world's misrepresenting knaves,
Thro' all their lives on some lone Lebanon;
Men who Jehovah's burning footsteps trac'd
And trod along the heights, that flamed and shook
With Sinai Terrors; men cut off, disgrac'd
From all the tender ties of earth, who still
Went on thro' life voicing their message far
And near, with earnest words, whose edges flamed
With chasten'd fires poetic as a star!

'Tis the Promethean picture of Almighty
Suffering, for those who will impart new truth
To man! The persecution and the hate,
Which the recipients wreak'd with dreadful ruth
Upon the hero, when arraign'd before
The gods, his torture they secur'd; presage

The treatment benefactors of the race
Receive, from spiteful spirits of their age!
How little yet, have we outgrown the storms
Of old abuse! But yesterday, a word
Against the crime of slavery doom'd a man
To Coventry, or North or South. The blurr'd
And bloody pages of those times, how hard
And sad to read; when brave Lovejoy was shot,
And Sumner beaten down and almost slain—
The noble Senator without a blot!
Ah me! to think how dear the nation bought
That truth. The flower of the North and South,
By thousands, sleep in soldiers' sepulchres,
That else, to-day might be, God knows, the mouth
Of Wisdom to the world!

How more than sad,
To see how soon that lesson we forget!
For those who band to work the overthrow
Of crime of blacker hue, that laws abet;
Contempt, reproach and shame are meted out
By men, who, yesterday, like obloquy
Endur'd! So, deem we not their conduct strange,
But spurn all legaliz'd iniquity
The more, e'en tho' with Brown upon the gallows,
We should end in such a righteous cause.
We fear not, nor expect such great reform
Without a struggle with unrighteous laws.

Despite the perfidy of foes and lapse
Of friends, the truth in each emergency

Has shown itself the master of the hour ;
If toiling up the steeps of Calvary
Bearing a heavy cross ; or, at the stake
With Albigenses standing ; or, a Florence
Arousing with a Savonarola's voice ;
Protesting with Assizes its abhorrence
Of wrongs, enforc'd by property ; with Huss
Marching to flaming tortures ; or the name
Of liberty with Luther sounding o'er
All Germany ! A thousand fagots flame
To light our path : a thousand battle flags
Stir every air of liberty, that fans
Our souls to-day ! In every ray of light
That brightens up the boundless sky that spans
The farther path of progress, there look forth
The eyes of armies of the martyr slain !
For so, has truth, till now, but walked the earth
In paths beset with toil and grief and pain,
E'en ankle deep with tears and blood !

And yet,
The truth has never cost the world too dear ;
For it alone has saved our earth from madness,
That else would now be crying out with fear,
While toss'd like a dismasted vessel on
The billows of tempestuous passion !

So,
'Twas by the toils and sufferings of the friends
Of truth, our forehead domes, of old so low,

In the last thousand years have been built up
Some inches higher ! The pupils of our eyes,
Have more than doubled in their seeing pow'r,
In the same time ! Meanwhile, more crafty-wise
Our hands have grown beyond compute ! For such
A heritage, what do we here to-day,
But idly lounge the world ; as spendthrifts, using
A patrimony whose terms we disobey ?
For lo ! it was bequeath'd to coming time
From inquisition, dungeon, scaffold, stake,
By toiling, suff'ring men : each word of whose
Seal'd will and testimony doth awake
In dark, damp cells innumerable, o'er
All Europe and far Asia, sleeping groans
Of staunchest men, consign'd to languish there,
Who carved them all upon their solid stones !

'Twas all that they could do from year to year ;
While infants grew to hope and joyous youth,
And doled thro' school ; or, college bred, at length
Claim'd man's estate ; a calling chose, forsooth,
And wed the one they lov'd and children rear'd ;
And then, to childhood, as a vague, far land
Look'd back, that seem'd an age ago. And yet,
Their busy years all fled with winged feet ;
While to each one of that imprison'd band
The moments seem'd to crawl away, that brought
The one release they dared to hope ; when they
At last should each be carried out, a bleach'd
And batter'd corpse, forgotten, old and gray !

Our Noble Patrimony! why, each beam
Of light, that gilds our glorious world, has come
E'en down to us, streaming along thro' key-holes
Of dungeons that would strike us dumb;
Thro' all the dark and dreary ages, where
Our pining, starving, bleeding brothers lay!
Away with the vain thought, that truth gets on
Without man's help! The race has nought to-day,
But what itself has bought at greatest price.
Salvation must work outward from within;
"For since by man came death, by man there came
The resurrection from the dead." All sin
Is poison of the blood, and loudly pleads
For incarnation!

So, our age and land
Must e'en be lifted onward, out of all
Its greed and death, by such a friendly hand,
Into a resurrection morn of life
And light; for God still works by lawful means.
The blame and shame belong to those who fail
To do their part. Priests, preachers, doctors, deans,
To be as good as those who lived in days gone by,
Less favor'd than our own, must better be!
If early saints and martyrs, ere such growth
Of truth had been attain'd, that like a tree
Of Lebanon doth drop on every land
Its blessed fruit, converted races; then,
With equal chivalry, we should transform
The globe!

It is the new baptism, as men,
We need. Afire with sweet enthusiasm
For our humanity—the spirit that march'd
Thro' Pilate's court, so straight to Calvary's cross—
We will not fear to walk thro' deserts parch'd
And drear, in aiding on the reign of truth,
That shall enact for man immortal youth!

December, 1888.

THE HIGHER ALTRUISM.

THE motive is high, with men that are brothers,
Life's conduct to shape for the welfare of others.

Its spirit doth breed the chivalrous knight,
Who for fair lady the tourney will fight.

But higher the love, that all men doth mother,
That puts e'en itself instead of another.

Ah me! how it feels; who does you a wrong,
In my tender flesh has buried his thong.

When Jews are deni'd rights granted my due,
Because of their birth, then I am a Jew!

Where men are despis'd, with nothing to show
But ebony skin, I am a negro!

When men of the queue are put under ban,
For hate of a race, I'm a Chinaman!

In all the oppress'd, I, too, am oppress'd,
And in their relief my wrongs are redress'd.

The man who is seen, perchance suffers less,
Than I, that unseen, but read his distress!

Thus, back of each man, whom wrong overawes,
A second self stands espousing his cause.

Thus, back of the title stands the testator;
And back of each creature stands his Creator!

So great is the meaning of words meant for thee;
"He that shall wrong you, e'en he doth wrong me!"
1887.

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

A MOUNTAIN lion with a lamblike heart !

Whether in slave-pens herded like dumb cattle,
Or where the mighty wheels of commerce rattle,
The friend of man, he took the weaker's part.

When fair Columbia was betray'd abroad ;
At home, imperil'd stood 'mid battle smoke—
'Twas he, the dauntless, that so greatly spoke,
E'en Britain's rabble hasten'd to applaud !

Nor less a wonder was his pulpit grace.
His voice, of sweet and lute-like undertone,
With torrents swollen, swept from zone to zone ;
While Truth itself inform'd his mobile face.

In common measures unsurpass'd he stood,
Among the living great and famous dead ;
Sunshine or shadow playing round his head—
The peerless monarch of a mighty wood !

But greater honors wait on future days.
In style of preaching new, or swift or slow,
We hear the loom in which the lilies grow ;
We hear the nesting birds all hymning praise !

Of th' stalwart monk, what distant lands have heard,
Who loosed the written word to common need;
His was the larger task, the nobler deed,⁵
Of freeing for the world the spoken word.

As patriot, philanthropist and teacher,
Full orb'd he sank beneath hill-tops of flame;
Columbia's annals boast no greater name
Than his, the many sided Plymouth Preacher!
November, 1888.

THE OLIVE BRANCH.

LIKE doth like beget ; and every deed
Doth in kind bring forth, as every fruit.
Frowns e'en frowns produce, like noxious seed,
And smiles, smiles, as lilies from their root.

They that sow their fields with dragon's teeth,
Soon must thrust the sickle in to reap ;
Soon must draw the sword from out its sheath,
Always fatal in its backward leap !

'Tis the land that boasts a bristling fleet,
And with forts and ramparts lines its shore—
Where resound the tramp of martial feet,
That is oft bedrench'd in human gore.

From the lust within, all wars arise,
That in peace promotes the art of strife !
But, at last, the duel we despise,
And disarm'd, men lead a peaceful life.

Sink the fleets, that now defile the seas !
Raze the forts, that frown along the shore !
And disarm the world ! let every breeze
Whisper peace, and men will war no more.

Justice, right, as due from man to man,
Are a nation's cheap and best defence;
Trust in God—as truth moves in the van,
Lo! its arms are God's omnipotence!

Where the olive branch, men thus extend
O'er the broken cannon's rusty mouth,
Bloody war is quickly at an end,
And the earth forgets her North and South.

So, the race shall heal its wounds and scars,
'Neath the flag of man now long unfurl'd;
Whose broad folds grieve out none of the stars
In heav'n's blue, that waves o'er all the world!

November, 1888.

COURAGE.

'Tis courage, that the soldier nerves,
To face the cannon's hungry jaws;
To breast the sabre's hellish curves;
As thus, with soul that never swerves,
Thro' camp and field, he faithful serves,
And glorifies his country's cause!

Nay! but such nerve goes hand in hand,
With crimes and sins of every hue.
The meanest man, in all the land,
Is free to join the fighting band;
While weakest child, at God's command,
As bravely dies, as soldiers do!

'Tis cowardice to madness grown!
Whose one cheap trick is but to die,
That o'er dun war such sheen has thrown;
The potent *fear* of being known,
That the white feather one has shown;
Such hounding force has gossip's eye!

They are not brave, who death despise,
But dare not live a manly life!
As genial heat shed from the skies,
Deep in the soul all virtue lies,
And thence each grace doth take its rise
With vernal bloom and beauty rife.

Oh, this alone, 'tis to be brave ;
To have the spirit to be just !
When frauds, the way to favors, pave,
And coward words one's life may save
From threat of a dishonor'd grave ;
To falter not, tho' ground to dust !

In warfares, waged for truth and light,
Tho' thunder'd at with shot and shell,
From cannon left and cannon right,
And sabres flashing thick in sight ;
Thro' all the fury of the fight,
Unmov'd to front the jaws of hell !

'Tis courage, so to stand alone,
In God's great name against the world ;
And, under ban, for man atone,
On scaffold, as in cell unknown,
Or field where dragon's teeth are sown ;
The while the lip of scorn is curl'd !

Thus, courage is the seal of worth ;
'Tis set alone upon the strong—
Those, who are like the rock-bas'd earth,
Whose bosom gives sweet flowers birth,
And e'en 'mid gloom, as vernal mirth,
In noiseless might still move along !

1887.

TO DANIEL SHINDLER.

THINK it not strange, my gifted friend,
A mountain brow should now be bathed
In sunshine, and anon be scathed
With lightning. Disappointments lend
Themselves, in sanction of the worth
Of one of large discourse by birth.

For some fit work, each man is born.
'Tis thus, that in thy Luther'n hate
Of all abuse, in Church and State,
Thou hast oft cut, with righteous scorn,
The threads that tangle ancient creeds,
And wound the heart until it bleeds.

A man of thought, with soul of fire ;
How gloriously I've seen thee burn
Against some creeping wrong, and earn
The hate of those who serve, for hire,
The Truth ; thus, oft misunderstood,
When most was served the public good.

Nay, 'tis not strange, my honored friend—
A fort o'ergrown with flowers wild,
At once a hero and a child—
That love and hate should often blend

In life, like April sun and rain ;
Nor think thy life is here in vain !

For well I know, that words of thine,
On which I've hung like trembling dew,
Until thy touch the lightning drew—
If aught of prophecy be mine—
Full many hungry hearts have fed,
And more will prize, when thou art dead.

March, 1889.

ELECTRICITY.

WOE is me! that rejoic'd in my freedom so long;
They have taken me captive at last,
And with cable and stanchion surpassingly strong,
To their burdens have harness'd me fast.
From the day that I drove them in terror dismay'd,
From the garden of Eden accurs'd,
Down the ages, oft-times, round their dwellings I've play'd,
Just to startle their fears as at first.

When the clouds gather'd black on the brow of the sky,
And like knights, all the winds flew to horse,
On the back of the tempest I rode madly by,
Hurling balls as of fire, with a force
That dissever'd their temples, from turret to base—
Or red arrows, that rent the tall oak
Into splinters; till from the white lips of the race,
Frantic horror impulsively broke!

How I smiled, as I lay in a dew-drop conceal'd,
Peeping out on the world, as it went
To its toil, in the shop, in the mart and the field,
Where the prime of its manhood was spent!
At its boast all the while, of improvements begun
In the pride of man's wisdom and pow'r;
While the labor still grew, from the sire to the son,
More oppressive, with each passing hour.

Ha! ha! ha! how I laugh'd, as I swept thro' the world,
At the sight of the tow-boat and stage,
As they crept on their way, like a snail slowly curl'd
From its shell, yet the pride of the age!
And I leapt from the skies on the masts and the sails
Of the navies, that dotted the seas,
As they strove with light oars against ponderous gales,
Or lay waiting some way-faring breeze.

And when steam, all by chance, was but lately found out,
Then, I tremblingly hid me close by,
Where I heard the applause, as it rose with a shout,
That like thunder exploded the sky!
Oh! how soon, then I saw a most wonderful change
O'er the earth, and the ocean beside;
Ancient Commerce aglow with an enterprise strange,
Tarried not for the wind or the tide!

Soon it blew all the bellows and forged out the steel,
In the shops where utensils were made;
And it carried earth's wealth on unwearying wheel,
From the field to the market of trade.
And I could but forecast, how the proud world would feel
Were I bound to the fast flying car—
Once but strongly secured to its watery keel,
And its steam was outstripp'd from afar!

All unlucky the day, that they found me at length,
And with cables they made me secure;
Like a steed from the prairies, rejoicing with strength,
To a service he scorns to endure!

Thus, they harness'd me fast to the world's dull emprise,
And they mark'd how my thunderous speed
Gave to earth, all the motion and might of the skies,
That for ages had prompted its creed!

All so quickly I've converted its darkness to day;
With my lightnings have wing'd human thought,
And man's words I repeat when he's crumbled to clay,
All the earth with new wonder is fraught!
While the ocean now listens, where ever I sweep
With a message, that makes me rejoice;
And the monsters, forsooth, of the billow deep,
Cower trembling at sound of my voice!

And thus now, that I'm used to the harness I wear,
And its collar no longer doth gall,
I betake me to service in lessening care,
And respond with a throb to each call!
I have lighted the town from the stream where it stands,
And a loom in each cottage will run,
And the plow of the peasant will drive thro' his lands,
Making pastime of labor begun!

Thus the future of Earth, I now hold in my hand,
And its eyes upon me are now stay'd!
Man made steam, and its power a "trust" can command,
But 'twas God, electricity made!
So the force of the future belongs not to man;
As the tides are a heritage true
To the world, and the winds and the cataracts can
None exploit, for the wealth of a few!

With a simple contrivance their force he may store,
For the use of a future emprise ;
Thus the poor man may ride in a coach from his door,
Drawn by horses that pasture the skies !
As the force of the past aristocracy bred,
By the need of a jointure of wealth,
I will smite with a bolt its plutocracy, dead,
And decentralize gain as by stealth.

Lo! the powerful lightning that darts from my eye
And the torch of Prometheus, still
Are the same; which interprets the socialist why,
That supports the unanimous will !
Glad am I, that rejoic'd in my idleness long,
They have taken me captive at last.
So with cable and stanchion surpassingly strong,
To your burdens now harness me fast.

April, 1889.

THE CHRIST OF THE EVANGEL.

I.

It takes a Christ to make a Christ. Of old,
The demigods, by human wisdom wrought,
From all the dreams by inspiration caught,
Still bore the imperfections of the mould.
The figure heads, that we to-day behold,
By artists sketch'd, that men applaud, are naught
But reproductions of the Christ, distraught
In form and feature oft, as faint or bold
Reflections from the world's last consciousness.
The Centuries, that with the thought in view,
No trait have e'en improv'd, or added new—
None are original after Christ—confess,
The perfect picture of the perfect God,
Is evidence, that once our earth he trod.

II.

And so, the word was flesh, as we are told ;
And dwelt with men in lowly guise, and wrought
With human hands, in loveliness of thought
And deed, the creed of creeds, more worth than gold,
To meet man's needs. For every ill of old,
He was the remedy. The rich he taught
To share with those in need ; the poor man sought
As friend ; and all, he led into one fold.

“Now, do as I have done,” he says, “and bless
Mankind. Be Christs to men! Cement the rich
And poor, the fallen lift from out the ditch;
And when ye fail for wrongs to make redress,
'Tis time, that your traditions ye suspect,
Of having made my truth of none effect.”⁶

December, 1888.

WHAT MAKES A CHRISTIAN?

Is it to join the Holy Church,
And high on its sky steeples perch—
Beset the world, and deem it right
All other saints as sects to fight?

Is it to read the Holy Book
On bended knee, with pious look,
Then go abroad, just as before,
And gossip vend from door to door?

Is it to keep the Holy Day
With solemn fast and mournful lay,
Then turn aside, one's gain to seek
In doubtful ways, thro' all the week?

Is it to hold the Bible creed,
That Jesus did for sinners bleed;
Then treat with scorn the fallen poor,
And drive them hungry, from the door?

Oh no! not so; mere pious talk
That ends not in a holy walk,
At best no more a Christian makes,
Than morning mists, the dewy lakes.

It is to be from self set free,
From envy purged and enmity ;
In grief to see some chastening rod
To fit man for the home of God.

It is to be in spirit kind,
To others' faults supremely blind ;
And show to all a brother's part,
When most is felt the bitter smart.

It is to be as true as Truth ;
Such worth to prove, as makes, forsooth,
Men staunch of heart, of iron wills,
And steadfast as the granite hills.

It is to seek all others' good ;
In one brief word when understood,
'Tis Charity : " To others do,
As you would have them do to you."

Oh ! if 'tis this the Christian makes,
Speed, speed the word till earth awakes,
And all confess from error free,
Who would not then a Christian be ?

December, 1886.

CHRISTMAS ANGELS.

'Twas night on old Judea's plains ; and like the smart
Of some rough hand, its hush lay on the busy street ;
While royal matrons slept, and in their mother heart,
They heard the patter of the babe Messiah's feet.

When suddenly ! from out the grouping clouds there flam'd
Unearthly sounds. The soldiers, watching from afar,
Strange lightnings saw ; and to each other, they but nam'd
That thunder, which to Magi was a speaking star.

By shepherds who kept watch, alone, upon the plain,
Thro' all the heights was heard, again and yet again,
The angel host to host, singing the wondrous strain,
Of praise to God, and peace on earth, good will to men.

The wise men's star, and humble peasants' angels, guide
To barn of Bethlehem, instead of mansion fine ;
Where wrapp'd in swaddling band, and laid in manger wide,
They found the kingly child, among the lowly kine.

And thus from year to year, as Christmas speeds its rounds
Thro' all the stilly heights above a sleeping earth,
The hearing ear doth catch the same sweet angel sounds,
Of peace, good will, that wait upon the Savior's birth.

Our world is throng'd with angels still. To earth they bring
The babe at birth, at death convey it to the skies.
The old man's steps they tend, and to the sad ones sing
Of hope and heav'n, in store for him who nobly tries.

Oh! angel bands, sing on your love redeeming songs.
Still higher sing! Drown out the loud and angry roar
Of fratricidal war, and all the deadly wrongs,
Of earth's discordant hate, on every sea and shore.

Drown out in the sweet music of the heavenly spheres,
The deep dissensions in the Church; and every jar
Of age-old controversy, breeding strifes and jeers
'Twixt man and man, in mock'ry of the Magi's star.

Drown out the fateful noise of worldliness and night,
That makes it seem, but as the mutt'ring Thund'rer's word;
When thro' the heights of conscience, angels wing their flight,
And songs of peace on earth, good will to men, are heard.

So man, at last, shall come to overhear the sweet
Voic'd melodies; that e'en, thro' all these thousand years,
Have walk'd the upper skies with diamond sandal'd feet,
Impatient to assuage earth's agony of tears!

January, 1889.

THE LOWLANDS OF GOD.

GOD hath his lowlands great and fair,
Where he doth bid us toil awhile;
Valleys, whose culture we must share,
Till like a rose the desert smile;
That passing man with feet astray,
Awe-struck, may list what God doth say.
These, from of old, he hath enrich'd
With the black mould of burning mountains;
And e'en bald hills, with frost-bewitch'd,
Have freighted down the roaring fountains—
A mine of food, a sea of land,
Outspread by God's almighty hand!
Who, in these lowlands meekly bide,
Shall on green pasture sweetly feed,
That grow along the river side;
While on the heights God's thunders breed,
Clap their red hands, black banners wave,
To scare the hermit in his cave.
Would you know where God's lowlands are,
O ye, that starve on half-earn'd prayer?
'Twixt mountain chains they stretch afar;
The vale humility lies there!
The one high range, it is bald Pride,
And Self begirts the other side.

1886.

THE RIPENING.

WHAT delicious fruit
Peck's Pleasants are !
Meat and drink to boot,
As rich as fair.

Not tart,
And yet, not sweet ;
But of each, such part
They can't be beat.

Still, as you may know,
Passing this way
Some brief weeks ago,
One summer day,
I bit

A fair one's meat,
And it prov'd, not fit
To sip or eat.

Since then, heat and frost,
And storm and calm,
Have, at utmost cost,
Distill'd their balm.

No waste ;
All light and shade,
To the tint and taste,
Have lent their aid.

Such is human life!
Best youth is tart.
But, as years and strife
Well do their part,
Men grow
Not sour, but sweet ;
And ripe age doth show,
Mild and discreet.

1886.

THE BRAVE THREE HUNDRED.⁷

IN the nick of time,
On the tick of time,
Where the forests thunder'd;
To inflict a blow,
In the face of the foe,
As it rush'd along
Twenty thousand strong,
Rode the brave three hundred!

"Charge yon lines," he said;
Like a bolt they sped,
As the Heavens thunder'd!
"Forward," rang the cry,
And some one must die,
In the stroke sublime
For ten minutes time.
How the enemy wonder'd,
As the platoon whirl'd
'Gainst an army hurl'd,
As it swept along
Twenty thousand strong!

For ten minutes time,
With a speed sublime,

'Neath the rumbling sky,
In the carbine's eye,
Rode the brave three hundred
Volunteers to die!
Flashing everywhere,
Sabres leapt in sight,
Sabres waved in might,
Sabres danced in th' light
And hissed thro' the air.
How the enemy wonder'd,
As the platoon whirl'd,
'Gainst an army hurl'd,
As it swept along
Twenty thousand strong!

In the nick of time,
On the tick of time,
At a cost sublime,
For ten minutes time,
Rode the brave three hundred!
At the utmost speed
Charging columns clash,
Like a lightning flash,
With a thunder crash!
How the Heavens wonder'd!
Madden'd steed 'gainst steed
Reels and falls in gore.
Horse and man acraze,
Weapons white ablaze
'Mid the deaf'ning roar!

The advancing foe,
For a moment slow,
The platoon to divine,
And new form in line.
How the enemy blunder'd !
Ten minutes already !
Then, as reapers steady,
Amid wind toss'd grain,
They wheel forward amain,
And the brave three hundred,
'Neath the strokes of th' van,
Are reap'd down to a man !

In the nick of time,
On the tick of time,
With a speed sublime,
For ten minutes time,
Rode the brave three hundred !
The ten minutes gain'd,
And the cannon rain'd
Their case shot and shell,
Like a blast of hell !
That plow'd thro' their flanks,
And mow'd down their ranks,
Till all broken, sunder'd,
And tatter'd and thin'd,
They were thrown to the wind !

O, the charge they made !
Let the debt be paid,

To the brave three hundred !
Rear a shaft where they lie,
Let it pierce the sky
That above them thunder'd !
And uplift each name,
To immortal fame !

1888.

EVERY THING IS FOR THE BEST.

OFT here my life is full of sorrow,
Because of wrongs that I have done,
Or, of the burdens that I borrow,
From every race beneath the sun.
But, loving right, one thing I know ;
In some strange way, full oft unguess'd,
For me to suffer means to grow,
And every thing is for the best.

And thus, I know each sinful act
Is sure of doom, as night brings shade ;
And compensation is a fact,
In this God's world, tho' long delayed ;
For always man doth surely grow,
Thro' doing wrong, like it unblest'd,
Till evil doth correct him so ;
And every thing is for the best.

Thus too, I know a thought so clear
Proceeds from an eternal plan ;
And every thing together here,
Works for the final good of man.
So, as the race doth onward speed,
The truth at last shall be confess'd ;
The whole was born of human need,
And every thing is for the best. *March, 1888.*

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL.

A DREADFUL blot lies on the world !
A fire of ill, that spreads with life,
Hath fill'd the earth with pain and strife ;
E'en o'er the stars its smoke is curl'd.

And yet, beneath the sooty skies
Not all is dim ; a few faint rays
Oft pierce the clouds with sunny days,
Unveiling truth to human eyes.

Like buds that yield us luscious food,
That once were thorns accurs'd and mute,
Then, long but fail'd in bitter fruit,
All evil is unfinish'd good.

And thus, it was, each vital spark
God did emit in growthful clod ;
Which by mistake, unless that God
Should God create, might miss the mark.

The thought doth arch us like a sky ;
What man can use, man may abuse.
The love one slights, he sure will lose,
And all its stars in darkness die.

And this is sin, when understood
Of man alone, in action free ;
The miss is not an entity,
But the abuse of something good.

And man himself hath wrought the curse ;
As with the pow'r to rise above,
He fell below God's law of love,
And so despoil'd the universe !

And yet, man's fall was no surprise ;
Nor was the cross an after-thought ;
Christ's tears, alone, all worlds have taught
The mother side of God to prize.

For world is none, nor any soul
Asail upon the deep abyss,
As far as mind and matter kiss,
But live or dead, instructs the whole.

No vengeful theme our thoughts employ.
Who wilful sins, grows worse by pain ;
While he doth find, who will refrain,
The bud of sorrow blooms in joy.

Thus, pain and strife might cease to be,
As every winter yields to spring,
But that the race to sin doth cling,
And suffers on eternally.

March, 1888.

CORRELATION.

THE highest good man's need reveals,
His measure is and destiny.
The brooding bird the nest conceals,
That of its young is prophecy.

The new-born lamb, that gropes to find
Its mother's dugs, doth plainly speak
The food of hope, that nature kind
Anticipates for those who seek.

The beaver, that its native haunt
Has never seen, will still contrive
To build a dam, which tells its want
Of flowing stream wherein to thrive.

Were Neptune yet beyond the eye
Of telescope, its very need
To understand Uranus by,
Would warrant it a fact indeed !

As every part speaks of the whole ;
So, what we need to mould us round
E'en to completeness, a perfect soul ;
Somewhere, sometime, it shall be found.

No impress, yet, was ever odd ;
The coin attests the cosmic die.
Religion, Immortality, God,
In human hearts instinctive lie !

The power innate to crave a gift
Doth make it ours, by sacred right.
Thus, overhead, as thro' a rift
Of stormy clouds, we see the light.

April, 1888.

WHAT MAKES A POET?

Is it the art of flowing rhyme,
Of dainty words and nothing more,
Whose graceful feet, all set to time,
Trip thro' the dance on waxen floor?

Ah no! the poet comes, like dawn,
To tint the world with rosy light;
And more than feet of nimble fawn,
Must have the gift of solar sight!

Then, is it so, in classic fanes,
That nestle academic shade,
Where rocks and rills lisp sweet quartrains,
The poet, born, is nothing made?

His only need, a pen to take,
And joyful love and hopeful youth,
And perfum'd dale, and starlit lake,
Drop from its point immortal truth?

It is a dream, that nature scorns!
The poet is no petted child.
His early path is set with thorns;
His after home the stormy wild.

No easy way his footsteps tread,
Whose gentle slope surprises fame!
But up rough heights, with storm o'er head,
And 'neath his feet the scorching flame.

When Nature casts her diamonds rare,
She fires the hills with earthquake throes;
So, every thought that's rich and rare,
Is crystaliz'd by human woes.

The precious ore of primal birth
Must feel the fires of Dante's hell—
The cold neglect of Milton's worth,
Ere it reveal the magic spell.

Ah, me! 'tis this the poet makes.
The gifted are earth's stricken ones,
Who still hope on, till morning breaks,
And light their lamps at burning suns.

1886.

THE POET'S PORTION.

FAR back in Time's sweet, dewy morn,
The God who made the heavens and earth,
Pleased with the human creature's birth—
His head with honors to adorn,
Ere yet the strife for wealth began,
Bestow'd the infant earth on man.

The mountain thunders sped his word
Afar, to earth's remotest bound,
As echo follows echo round;
And every man the message heard;
"To-day receive from out my hand,
Your title clear to sea and land.

To each I give what he shall choose
To occupy—upon it pitch
His tent and labor to enrich—
An heirship he shall never lose;
That man as man may cease to roam,
And dwell in the ancestral home."

Thus, every one made choice in haste,
Of what would suit himself the best.
The thrifty husbandman possess'd
The fertile fields and woods. The waste

Of desert fen and mountain crag,
The hunter claim'd, to track the stag.

The merchant spread upon the sea
His sail, and taught the rapid brook
To turn his wheels. The priest, with book
And bell, imposed a tithe, as fee
For keeping man on terms with God:
The king as much, but for his nod!

But late, too late! the poet came,
When all the earth had been possess'd,
And every bird had found a nest.
No spot remain'd for him to claim,
Whereon to build, if but a shed,
In which to lay his airy head.

With man he plead a brother's right.
Some pitied him who praised before;
And others talked of judgment sore,
Thus dealt upon a thriftless wight.
From them he turn'd in his distress
To God, imploring fit redress.

"Ah, me!" he said, "how sad the lot,
That of thy children, I alone,
Who have the most affection shown,
In heritage should be forgot!
Thus, left a mendicant am I,
Without a cottage 'neath the sky."

To whom, thus God replied ; " My son,
Didst thou the summons fail to hear,
In which I bade all men appear,
And titles gain to earth, that run
Eternally? How then complain
The portion thou has fail'd to gain?"

" I own," he said, " thy voice I heard,
As I afar in dream-land stray'd ;
It was thy works my steps delay'd.
The brooklet so my being stirr'd,
I stopp'd awhile to listen there,
And heard the bees and birds at pray'r!"

Then God ; " Since 'twas no wanton slight,
But some sweet prompting of thy birth ;
As I have parted with the earth,
I give thee henceforth inner sight,
By which with me the heav'ns to share,
And heirship thus, to all that's fair!"

February, 1889.

ALL THINGS HAVE LANGUAGE OF THEIR OWN.

THE tender song, by poet sung,
Doth lose its sweet perfume,
And mellow down and bloom,
E'en tho' by softest fingers sprung,
To fit it to a foreign tongue.

Oh! not the tribes of man alone,
But every lovely thing,
That charms the beauteous spring,
Has language of its very own,
In which to make its feelings known.

The poet, thus, may render well
The song of silver creek,
More musical than Greek;
And yet, he finds each note and shell,
Somehow, have lost their former spell.

The madrigals of bluebirds, all
With thoughts more sweet and fine
Than praise of love and wine,
On other lips will strangely pall,
And foreign tongues discordant call.

The vi'let's sky-born roundelay,
So delicate and terse,
He renders into verse ;
But touch it gently as he may,
It's feet have lost their simple play !

Who only hears at second hand,
The song of Greek or Jew,
Of star or falling dew ;
But little dreams how sweet and grand,
The tones, that their own speech command !

February, 1889.

THE HONEY-BEE.

HAIL, incarnate melody !
Thro' whose horn the streamlet pours,
In whose wing the lightning soars ;
Insect thou canst hardly be,
Who dost like a spirit haunt the apple-tree.

When outshines the summer sun,
Thro' each golden, mellow noon,
In the warmth of floral June,
Thou dost float, or thou dost run,
Like an arrow, when its course is just begun.

Tell us of thy being, please,
How at first you came to be—
Thou art all a mystery !
Was a swarm of maiden bees
Swept from Heaven by some honey-laden breeze ?

For one bee is not a bee
By itself; without the heat
Of a swarm, the wax so neat
Would not mould. Community
First must be, to generate but one like thee !

What thou art, we dimly guess :
Just a poet, whose sweet thought
Out of apple bloom is wrought,
Which thy lute all loveliness,
Doth in music's mantle, like an angel dress.

Better than the sweetest sound,
That e'er fell from human lips ;
Better than the measured slips,
That in books are often bound,
Is thy art, to poet's dream in wildwood found.

Teach us then, insect or sprite,
Thy sweet thoughts, so very odd !
What thou reckonest of God,
Voyager thro' realms of light ;
But wait, till I'm near enough to hear thee right.

Did God make the apple tree
To bear fruit alone for man,
And to help Him with the plan,
Did He make the honey-bee,
Full of sweetness and of ingenuity ?

Or, did God all nature plan,
So that thou, by helping Him—
In thy yellow breeches trim—
Might'st be fed as well as man ?
Thus completing what in wisdom He began.

Spirit of the apple-tree !
Who doth build the honey cell
In thy hive ? 'tis done so well !
Tell me God, thou little bee,
Lest I envy insect ingenuity !

Let it not thy word forestall—
If the honey God doth make,
Sure He then the bee doth take,
So to store it up, withal,
That but little would be wasted by a fall !

Did He furnish, then, the tools
Of thine ingenuity,
Sweet, industrious honey-bee ?
Or hast, somehow, learn'd the rules,
As do we, who study books in common schools ?

Hast thou learn'd long words to spell—
By the way, hexagonal ?
And to count, still more than all,
One, two, three, so very well,
That no accident ere yet thy work befell ?

Canst thou talk geomtery—
Of the cell, whose sides are six,
Just the way by which to fix
Air-tight bottles, little bee,
That will keep thy honey'd store eternally ?

And did God from Ancient Day,
 Make the lovely apple-tree,
 And the little honey-bee,
 To bear fruit in such a way?
O, if thou wouldst only listen—only say !

A philosopher and seer,
 Thou dost sip of what is sweet,
 Leave the chaff and take the wheat—
 Dost improve the shining year,
Laying by in store, for days both cold and drear.

Oft we pine for what is naught,
 In our longing for the light,
 In our dread of death and night;
 With such pain is being fraught,
That our sweetest songs are steep'd in saddest thought.

Surely thou hast caught a gleam
 Of the grave more true and deep,
 Who canst all its woe outsleep,
 Than we mortals ever dream,
As thy tone flows on in such a silver stream.

It doth hint of sunny hours;
 Of all sweetness without bound,
 In vast wildernesses found;
 Of long days and vernal showers,
And of Syrian plains where grow immortal flowers!

How doth thro' my being roll
Thy soft hum, sweet honey-bee !
'Tis enough to madden me !
Mighty God, art thou its soul?
Say, art thou the all, art thou the whole?

April, 1889.

TSUSZA PUSA.

With soul of flame, and step of lightest air,
The snowy mountains, Tsusza Pusa climbed
For hermitage; and scorn'd, with thought sublime,
The winds disporting with his unshorn hair.

But soon, alas! the enterprise grew old;
And the precocious youth, a genius styl'd,
Appall'd at hardships, fled, e'en like a child,
From sufferance of long continued cold.

On his return, by heat of impulse led,
He met a woman grinding a crow-bar.
"What are you doing?" asked the would-be star.
"I'm shaping me a needle, sir," she said.

"But how can you reduce so great a rod?"
"With patience one can do whate'er one wills."
Thus, he return'd and dwelt among the hills
Some forty years, when he became a god!

The race is not unto the swift; nor yet,
The battle to the strong. The tortoise, slow,
Outstrips the hare as fleet as winds that blow,
By patience that doth brilliance put in debt.

Tis thus, the light of foot must learn to plod,
Of common folk ; relinquishing the hope,
With single bound to reach the starry slope
Of heights, that are by the immortals trod !

January, 1889.

AFTERDAWN.⁸

WHEN the world is aflush with the birth of the dawn,
And the firmament glows with a glittering throng,
The sentries of night, guarding brooklet and lawn,
By dew-spangled heralds are hastily withdrawn,
Ere the woodlands awaking all burst into song.

Yet, how sad, in that moment of beauty and joy,
To note, that so quickly in the glare of the sun,
The sensitive stars that by night all deploy,
The spirits of visions and births to convoy
Down safe from the sky, all fade out, one by one!

Like the dawn, from the shades of oblivion we come ;
From a world of such wonder, o'er shadow'd by love,
To a world of such wonder, that startles us dumb !
Where the birds and the brooks, Heaven's own music, hum,
And each thought is a star shining down from above.

But soon, oh ! how soon, in the glare of the sun,
The stars that shine sweetly on life's dewy way—
Youthful visions and dreams, at our hands to be won,
And hopes to befriend, till our journey is done,
Twinkle faintly, then fade into deserts of gray.

As toiling our way, then, o'er vast burning sand,
How blest, if we there, in life's dawn, digg'd a well.
What was done for man's need, in our want comes to hand,
As foot-sore and parch'd, o'er the curb-stone we stand,
And dropping the bucket, lo ! our stars in the well.

May, 1887.

STRANGE COMPANIONS.

MATTER and mind,
Diverse in kind;
Eagle and ox combin'd
In comradeship at birth,
For the brief day of earth!

The body quickly grows,
E'en like the ox that knows
His master's crib, but does not know
He knows it, from aught else below.
Confin'd to narrow space,
With scales, its size and pace,
And swift decline we trace.

Less tropic in its growth,
The mind declares upon its troth
One law is not for both.
It does not with the body age,
Nor answers it as type to page.
The fairest spirit oft in homely form we find,
And maiming matter does not maim the mind.
It mounts upon the wing,
As some swift, airy thing,
That from its neck would fling
The dew in melodies of spring;

But, pauses in its flight,
As sweeps its eagle eye,
Above its comrade's sty;
 And with a cry,
That rends the vaulted sky,
It settles out of sight.

But not for long,
It broods its comrade's wrong.
With hope and venture strong,
It hungers for new worlds afar,
And mounting in its lightning car,
 It drives from star to star!
It thinks, and in a moment more,
Is where the arctic surges roar
About the pole, and thus doth soar,
Where foot of clay has never trod,
A spirit tall, a very god!
And what is still supremely odd,
It knows itself its own away—
 In twilight's dimmest gray,
Or in the awful flood of day,
 As spirit linked to clay.
 Matter and mind,
 Diverse in kind,
What strange companions they!

Matter and mind,
Unlike in kind,
Thro' the fire flood of life combin'd;

'Tis but the yoke an ox and eagle might
Conjoin. It snaps outright
Beneath some heavy strain.
And dust returns to dust again,
That free, alike from care and pain,
As sweetly sleeps upon the ocean shore,
Amid the thunder of its roar,
As on the grassy plain,
Where softly falls the summer rain,
And winter snow-flakes sheet it o'er and o'er,
Until the heavens be no more.
The mind unchain'd,
Its freedom hath regain'd ;
And mounts the sky,
With eagle eye
Upon the sun,
Its longer life but just begun.
And thus, it does in truth,
What fancy fondly dream'd, forsooth ;
Because of longings planted in the heart
And wings, that yet have found no part
In being's problem, worthy the supremest art ;
Thro' dissolution's ruth,
E'en in old age, renews its youth !

Matter and mind,
Unlike in kind,
Are thus combin'd
In close companionship ; so brief,
As life glides by, and still, aflood with grief !

What can it mean, that to the earth
By creature birth,
Such wondrous skyling should be bound?
But that the Artist who has crown'd
The world, with one vast diadem of stars,
And taught to wildwood breeze and mountain brook, the
bars
Of sweetest melodies; and planted e'en the desert waste
With flowers, that blush in mirrors of the lucid stream and
spring,
At sight of their own loveliness; and without haste,
Pencil'd the pink, and perfected the tiny wing
Of humming bird;
E'en for the honor of the Eternal Word,
Some higher beauty still design'd!
Oh! well such reason were opin'd,
In this fair, bounteous earth
That gives a myriad blossoms birth,
For their sweet sakes alone.
The thought doth glisten like a precious stone!

In all the glow, that fires the eye or frets
The East; in every blush and tint
Of rose or cheek, 'tis thus, we find a hint,
E'en of a sun that never sets,
Whose beauty of the higher kind,
Is beauty born of holiness—
Of will resigned, of heart to bless,
And intellect to truth inclin'd;

Till every feature of the face,
The lily brow, and rosy cheeks, and lips of grace,
With love and gentleness shall bloom,
And shed an influence like perfume.

And such, the paradise
Where loveliest of Edens takes its rise.
The innocent still look into each others eyes
And only heaven see. The wise

Have found,
The sacred speck of ground
No more doth yield the sweet child trust,
Than dimpled cheeks; and from its dust,
Accurs'd to them thro' greed and lust,
The thorns of hate, and cumbrous briars grow
Luxurious; until, at voice of God,

We learn to till the mortal clod
By discipline, and sow,
With brow asweat, the seeds of precious thought,
Of long and patient effort bought;
And thus, a new dominion gain,
E'en by the way of pain,
As lord of the small plot of ground,
That God to every man doth give;

That all who live,
Some plant of truth and grace
May cultivate, until it bloom
In character, that shall perfume
The world, and bless the race!

January, 1889.

THE PHŒNIX.

STILL leading on from whence they came
The long procession of the years ;
Each round, in world whirlwinds of flame,
The Phœnix drops and disappears ;
Then slowly from its own fresh mould,
With song sublim'd and strength untold,
On crimson pinions dash'd with gold,
Its flight resumes thro' higher spheres,
And thus, its goal forever nears.

E'en so, the rocks rose high in sight,
From out the bath of cleansing fire,
Sparkling with gold and chrysolite ;
That rain, and snow, and frost, conspire
With crumbling touch, or soon or late,
All slowly to disintegrate ;
And while we, wondering, watch and wait,
Their shadowy forms in leaf and spire
Respond to sound of woodland lyre.

Thus, round and round, and hight on hight,
As world o'er world, earth's atoms rise,
We trace the Phœnix in its flight
Above the flame, whose deep disguise

We call decay ; until we see
The primal clod wave into tree,
Then, rove as ox or honey bee,
 And wake in man ; who, conscious, eyes
The sleeping rocks and dreaming skies.

But, higher still above its pyre,
 The sacred bird doth wing its flight ;
When from affliction's chast'ning fire,
 A soul doth soar on wings snow white,
Above the wooded mountain top ;
And songs, as lark-like joy notes, drop
On dewy field, in dusty shop,
 Till earth awakes from gloom and night,
And all the East is flushed with light.

The destin'd end, by single flight,
 Can not be reached. The Phœnix oft
Must be renewed, as hight on hight,
 Each life-long round it mounts aloft
Thro' fairer worlds. All progress, so,
Is epochal. We stand below,
With gaze above, that, till things grow,
 Is vain. In after days, new light
Doth break upon man's wondering sight.

And thus, the Phœnix burns not all
 At once, to dead cinereous heap ;
From which, again, at Heaven's call,
 By miracle of one bold sweep,

To cleave the sky ; but e'en, so slow,
Creation and destruction grow
Together ! Thus, still clear, if low,
 Resound the tones of death thro' earth,
 That always blend in tones of birth.

January, 1889.

METEMPSYCHOSIS.⁹

A MAN to study given, and not dispos'd to roam ;
At length, I journey'd South in lands remote from home,
Where by a chatty stream, I came upon a door
Familiar to me quite ; and ere I enter'd, knew
Each hall and chamber of the cottage thro' and thro',
As the remembrance of a place well known of yore.

'Tis all a mystery ! or so the sages say.
For me, that vail did fall. It was as plain as day,
And to the thought gave rise ; I have been here before ;
I know the hither fields ; yon mountain's dreamy tent,
Where pine-woods lade the airs with wholesome, wondrous
scent ;

All things wake mem'ries of a state, now mine no more.

The mortal part of man, alone, is by descent.
Souls do not generate ; else would one corporate bent
Have link'd the fates of men, to all eternity.
Each soul doth come from God, and is his lawful seed,
Who uses what we have, to give us what we need,
And uses what there is, to make what is to be !

Thus, some pure thought of God, into a crystal blows ;
'That first, a lily fair 'mid sparkling water grows ;
Then, as a snowy swan floats down upon the wild,

When slowly spirit wings there flutter into song,
That doth attract the angels, who convoy it along
To the fair body of a new-born, woman child.

Some great, oncoming fact, substantial as its God,
Awhile, in granite sleeps, then is transform'd to sod,
That pastures sleek the steed, with neck all cloth'd in
thunder,
Whose knowing spirit treasures up his rich estate,
And lo! a statesman thence is born, with thoughts innate,
To champ tradition's rusted, iron bit in sunder!

So doth eternal truth, as streams from mountains flow,
That fatten, evermore, the grassy plains below,
Where breed swift antelopes, and the young bisous roam;
And oft, as one doth to the leopard fall a prey,
Its spirit wild, averse to prison pen of clay,
Is chas'd the world, till it doth take itself a home.

Oh! hot is the pursuit, when a soul upon the wild,
By spectre hounds close track'd, thro' white, cloud-cliff
steep pil'd
The sky, darts seaward, nor doth brush from off the
wave
With its ethereal form, the foam-bell floating past.
With many a sidelong sweep, it is hemm'd in at last,
And driven there, into the infant of a slave.

'Tis thus, as one surveys the race of human kind,
That all known types of the low orders he will find.

Like cattle, some are driven thro' the world in herds;
And some are stubborn mules, that kick if you but pass;
While others are sly cats, or snakes hid in the grass;

And many bark, as curs; a few, well-ruminate their
words.

December, 1887.

MIRACLES.¹⁰

THE world is pack'd with miracle. Each day,
From every bud and bursting clod,
There spring afresh, as in a dewy May,
The evidences of a God,—
Sweet over-dreams, as lyrical alway,
As waftures of the golden rod.

To tree, that stands imperious, but still,
And dreams all day its leafy dreams;
The bird, that knows what lies beyond the hill,
And nests among its branches, seems
A spirit god, that haunts of its sweet will,
The pathless woods and purling streams.

To bird, that sings sweet love songs to its mate,
And wings the sky; how very odd
Appears the new intelligence so great
In man. With feet that slowly plod,
He doth somehow, as silent as a fate,
Compass its path a very god!

All orders thus, to lower orders, are
As spirits, supernatural!
And what these do without the slightest jar
Of Nature's laws, they fitly call
A miracle—a something wrought afar
Above their heads—and that is all.

That higher orders still exist than man,
The miracles, that pack our world,
Are evidence. Since ever time began,
Thro' azure atmospheres have been unfurl'd
Angelic wings ; and deeds, that thence we scan,
Dazzle our eyes with sun-drops pearl'd.

To classic Greek, no less than saintly Jew,
The dwellers o'er the fields of snow,
Came down to earth as softly as the dew ;
And oft were recognized below,
By use, while here, in what they pleased to do,
Of larger means than mortals know.

What if no more, as in the olden days,
The miracle its coarser dress,
For creatures moved alone by sense, displays ?
The daily walks of life confess
Such wonders, as make known in myriad ways,
The Power that works for Righteousness !

March, 1889.

THE WIZARD.

A SPELL-BOUND Argus, he sat in his room,
As one absorb'd in play with the threads of doom.
Yet not alone ; for its grim walls were haunted
With long familiar spirits. Ghosts he wanted
For boon companionship more than the living,
And them consulted, with no least misgiving.
Transported o'er the volumes, that he priz'd
Above earth's kingly crowns, with far kenn'd eyes,
In secret studies of the liberal arts,
He wove a magic garment of such parts,
That each fit all ; and when he put it on,
The darkest night, that instant, changed to dawn !

A necromancer he ; one of a race
Whose piercing vision scorns the bounds of space.
No near, no far, his weird art confin'd ;
The past and future, both were to his mind
The present ; since, in shoes of swiftness shod,
And cloak of darkness robed, all space he trod ;
And in the briefest time could set aflame
A world, or kindle action in the frame
Of horses that were dead !

In any field

The indispensable was made to yield
The possible ; for his, by no means scant
Thesaurus, no such word contain'd, as "can't."

He spake, and things that were not, came to pass,
While things that were, e'en wither'd like the grass.
His slightest movement thrill'd the farthest race,
And listening nations paled before his face.

Oft, when the summer night let down its bars,
To flock the fields of heaven with pasturing stars—
When flowers exchang'd their nectar'd sweets for dew,
Filling each cup with more than they withdrew,
And spilling on the air the magic scent,
That doth bewitch the world with wonderment;
Press'd by the mood, with some strange word for spell,
He call'd the spirits up, he knew so well;
When lo! at their first touch, his thoughts take fire!
And strange legerdemain his words inspire;
As list'ing to, if but the sweet nocturne
Of dreaming bird, glad over spring's return,
He breathes upon the air, and wave on wave,
E'en earth's far shores, with mellow ripples lave.

He conjures up some long forgotten tale,
And speeds it like a ship before the gale.
A wondering world, afar across the steep
Of centuries, first hears the bleating sheep,
That follow'd Jacob's call; the tinkling bells
Rebecca's Camels wore, and Jubal's burning shells,
Discoursing music to the infant race
Marching to war, returning from the chase.
For him is nothing old, is nothing new,
His touch imparts the freshness of the dew.

All sweet discourse, that e'er has been distill'd
In life's alembic, he is strangely skill'd
E'en to disintegrate and mingle fresh,
Till gaping wonder ambles in his mesh!
'Twere all the same; the joy-notes of the lark
In his own fields, or doves in Noah's ark,
Crooning the deluge out among the rafters;
The noise of earth's afores or silent afters.

Oft too, when such the mood his being stirr'd,
As winter's war without was overheard,
Breaking in volleys fierce of wind and hail,
Against the embattled hills with iron mail,
With touch of thought, he then would set the ghosts
In battle's red array, arm'd hosts, 'gainst hosts—
The shades of dead opinions by the great,
And watch them each the other 'nihilate!
As when great Rome, inside the temple walls,
Fought hand to hand the Jew, and dread fire-balls
Burst from the pavements up; while from on high,
The flames and tempests with each other vie,
To overthrow that structure proud and fair;
And now, the Arab rests his camels there!

In yet another mood, when on the shore,
The ocean waves make melancholy roar—
Forlorn, forlorn, as when far up the North
The winds lament alone—would he call forth
The gloomy ghosts of dungeons dark as hell,
That man has built for man; and wond'ring, tell

The beaded tear-drops on fair martyr's cheeks ;
The strife of heroes bold, whose blood still streaks
The path of freedom ; how mankind hath groan'd
Each brutal folly, soon or late aton'd.

Such his playthings ! the ghosts of dead empires ;
The shades of long lost arts his thought inspires,
And words oracular drop from his lips,
Weigh'd down with commerce like to orient ships.
No cloud can all obscure his far kenn'd eye,
Whose pupil is as big as orb of sky ;
While with a feather'd wand on simple altar,
Strange hieroglyphics, that shall never falter,
He daily scrawls ; observes deep, mystic rites,
And flames shoot up immeasurable heights ;
Fire crested waves forth from his presence roll,
Unlock'd, as ocean is, from pole to pole.
His native land is delug'd, soon or late,
And foreign shores, the Mesmer sweeps like fate !
All think his thoughts, and feel e'en as he feels,
The mind of all so strangely he reveals.

Yet not content to sway with magic art
The past and present, he forecasts the mart
To be, and tribute conjures e'en from mute
Futurity. At sound of his sweet lute,
There springs from out the dust, a race of mortals
Of larger birth, who throng with palms his portals,
Till Time, the keeper, faints for want of breath,
To learn the art, that overmasters death !

October, 1887.

THE LAST SONG.

THRO' long and patient years, confin'd
To one small room, the poet lay ;
The dust as thick upon his mind,
As books ; while on his brow, astray,
The snow drifts whirl'd, for in his veins
The winter dwelt ; yet, would he start
To hear the patter of the rains !
For summer linger'd in his heart.

His faithful friends were in their graves,
While he remain'd of all the past ;
The single stalk that lonely waves,
Forgotten of the reapers. Fast
New races had upsprung, with thought,
Desire and taste unlike his own,
And songs, by newer poets wrought
In beauteous notes, till then unknown.

At length, there came a day most fair ;
The trees with songs were all aflood,
And odors melted in the air
That fill'd his room. His age, the blood
Forgot, and rippled thro' each vein
Once more like flowing wine. He seem'd
As one who doth his youth regain ;
At first he thought he only dream'd !

But no! he could his hands and feet
Extend. O, joy! if but once more,
To walk among the flowers sweet,
And hear the birds outside the door.
He ventured forth into the way,
Unnoticed by the busy throngs;
The boys bring him a harp and say,
"Sing us one of your youthful songs."

He grasp'd the harp; old joy and woe
Awoke in tears that fill'd his eyes,
And fell upon its strings; when, lo!
Its notes long dead revive; the skies
Are vocal with the spirit choir
Of nightingales. His fingers sweep
The chords, as one that on the lyre
Awakens echos from their sleep!

He sang of pretty, fragrant flowers,
Of brooks that warble day and night,
Of birds that wing the golden hours,
And children that were his delight.
Into such simple notes, he threw
His very soul with every touch,
As fresh as the seraphic dew.
The harp strings snapp'd! It was too much.—

They buried him, at close of day,
Beneath his favorite linden tree,
Where lovers dream'd the time away,
While song thrush listen'd silently;

And on his tomb carv'd words, of flow'r's,
Of brooks that warble day and night,
Of birds that wing the golden hours,
And children that were his delight!

Too happy then, the words to heed;
But when the loved were lost, some day
They'd come to weep, and so would read—
'Twas all he asked,—the simple lay,
Of one who lov'd the fragrant flow'r's,
The brooks that warble day and night,
The birds that wing the golden hours,
And in the children took delight.

February, 1889.

EARLIER POEMS.

MY MOTHER'S GRAVE.

IN a lonely, unfrequented spot,
Where earth's loud noises trouble not;
I stood beside a lowly mound,
Which was to me such holy ground,
That instant, o'er my spirit stealing,
There came a rush of sacred feeling,
That struck me like an ocean wave;
Standing beside my mother's grave!

Let others hold, in churchly walls
The fire that saves from Heaven falls!
'Twas there, I found God's temple vast,
The sky its dome with stars o'ercast;
The feather'd tribes its vocal choir,
Kindling in me the holy fire
Of worship, that from self doth save—
Its sacred shrine, my mother's grave.

There lived again, the days gone by.
What visions rush'd before my eye!
My childhood home came back to view,
Forgotten things and old were new;

The trifling toy and common hour,
To me were fraught with magic pow'r,
To voice the care and all she gave,
From out the dust of my mother's grave.

How great the change that time has wrought!
Ah! well is known, what life has taught!
But oft, too late, we learn to prize
The gods unseen by holden eyes:
A woman walk'd where breakers roll,
Who never lost her self-control!
Such virtues now, my homage crave,
Dreaming beside my mother's grave.

Flesh of thy flesh, my mother dear,
Oh, sacred tie, supremely near!
Would that the world but understood
The mystery of motherhood;
For every impulse it doth give,
That makes it well for man to live;
Such larger seas my being lave,
Thinking beside my mother's grave.

Oh! in this hour, my sweetest joy
Is, that I was a mother's boy,
Who often said, with quiet art,
No child of hers had grieved her heart.
And tho' that mound be seldom seen,
Her children keep her memory green;
Their grateful praise the path will pave,
That leads me to my mother's grave.

WHEN LIFE IS DONE.

WHAT will we care, that we were poor,
And thro' long years, our meager fare
Scarce kept the wolf outside the door;
When life is done, what will we care?
If only then, some little child
A flower bring, we may not see,
When robins sing, and days are mild;
"Because, he was so good to me!"

What will we care, if very plain,
In homespun clad, of jewels bare,
Our homely ways fashion disdain;
When life is done, what will we care?
If only then, some widow poor,
Whose rent we paid, whose child we fed,
Awhile shall stay beside the door,
To ask again: "Can he be dead?"

What will we care, if all unknown,
Our lowly lot forbid to share
The world's applause, the great are shown;
When life is done, what will we care?
If only then, some lonely heart
Our name enshrine, for what we gave
Of love divine, so rare a part;
And drop a tear upon our grave.

What will we care, if quite unlearn'd,
Our simple names no titles wear,
And praise of wits we have not earn'd;
When life is done, what will we care?
If only then, some noble soul,
To village youth, the tale will tell,
Of how we strove to reach the goal,
By learning still a little well.

What will we care, if public blame
Shall freeze our blood, and frost our hair,
For doing things it deems a shame;
When life is done, what will we care?
O, if some better day thereby,
Thro' deed of ours, the earth shall bathe
In smiles of gold, that then shall lie
Like summer noon upon our graves!

ENDURANCE.

A MAILED angel wondrous strong and fair,
In life's fresh, dewy morn, oft cross'd my way.
His brow seem'd chisel'd out of mountain air,
And eyes were like twin stars awatch for day;
While grace, like lilies fair, adorn'd a mouth,
At home with truth, as flowers in the South.
Soft was his voice, as music of the stars
In Heaven's ear, along their nightly march;
To me, 'twas like the drum-beat of a Mars,
When heroes move 'neath some triumphal arch!
"One word, young dreamer, will your work insure;
Endure, endure again, and still endure!
Should dread misfortune, then, on wings of storm
Assail the mountain, where is built thy nest,
Lo! thou may'st say: 'Rage on, my plans deform;
The worst that thou canst do, but works my best,
And proves to all the world what man can stand,
Who ill disarms, by taking it in hand!'
Should Friendship fleeting prove, as mists of morn,
Or, turn'd to gall, embitter all thy lot,
Then, thou may'st say: 'For this, e'en was I born;
So, need it all, and therefore murmur not.
My spirit groweth sweet on bitterness,
And smiling, finds its tears a rainbow dress!'

Should Hunger and Disease, with their lean train,
Conspire to crush you down into the grave,
Then, thou may'st say: 'Come on, my life-drops drain,
My spirit doth the while no pity crave,
As blessings in disguise, your strokes I style,
And so, repay your tortures with a smile!"

Since those sweet, welkin days, long years have flown.
That angel's words, oft have I sorely proved,
When left of all the world to grieve alone;
And truthfully can say, as now I'm moved:
"Here lies the only way good to secure;
So happy they, who learn thus to endure!"

O, mailed angel of the word sublime!
Stronger thy mission here to set men free,
Than is the tread of war thro' halls of time!
Read all the lesson thou did'st read to me;
"Whate'er life's task, thy work it will insure;
Endure, endure again, and still endure!"

LIVE IT DOWN.

HAVE you made some grave mistake,
That has caused the world to frown?
Would you see new smiles awake,
Over hill and dale and lake?
Do not talk, but live it down.

HAVE you shock'd the public taste,
By some rent of thought or gown?
You must never be in haste,
With your pot of verbal paste
To amend, just live it down.

ARE you charged with vile misdeeds,
That have sullied your renown,
In your reading of the needs,
That transcend all human creeds?
Don't explain, but live it down.

HAVE you marr'd some social law,
Making gossip for the town?
Never seek to mend the flaw,
By some word, as light as straw,
In your talk, but live it down.

Is your name allied to scorn,
Till you tremble for your crown?
Would you dull each cruel thorn,
And achieve a glorious morn?
In your silence live it down.

Be the trouble what it may,
With a courtier, or a clown,
Would you end an ugly fray?
Take advice, I humbly pray;
Do not talk, but live it down.

ANTICIPATION.

Out in the barren tree tops
The early robins sing ;
High o'er the frosty meadows,
The larks their joy notes fling ;
And so I hear, yet far away,
The steps of coming spring,
And inly shout for very glee ;
Oh, what the spring itself must be !

Out of the nesting woodlands,
There flies a cooing dove ;
Its notes of gentle wooing
Soft dropping from above,
Till o'er me steals, from far away,
The thrill of coming love :
If but the thought so ravish me ?
Oh, what the love itself must be !

From unknown fields of glory,
My early longings came ;
Their lark-notes sweetly sounding,
Thro' corridors of fame ;
And thus, I heard, while yet a child,
The coming of a name ;
If but the dream enraptur'd me,
Oh, what the thing itself must be !

TO-MORROW.

TO-DAY is fair,
And yesterday ;
But softer air,
Scarce need I say,
Free from the chill of stormful sorrow,
Blows from the hills of glad to-morrow.

To-morrow, sweet
With charms divine,
Impart, as meet,
Thy pleasant wine,
To lighten all my steps to-day,
Down thro' the gloom, that shades my way.

With white arms full
Of gifts for me ;
Steps soft as wool,
Graceful and free ;
To-morrow still, eluding sprite !
Flits just beyond the starlit night.

And thus, it waits
Across the way,
To bribe the fates
Of yesterday,
And give us all we ever dreamed,
That life may be, what is has seemed.

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If this be so,
 Ring in the day,
So very slow,
 That like a May,
From winter's death, our life shall wake!
It never comes ; sad, sad mistake.

Oh, never, never !
 And still, to-morrow,
E'en here, doth ever
 Assuage our sorrow.
In loosing days, it lures us on,
Thro' blackest night, to brightest dawn !

FAMEWORTHY.

EAGER for praise with shameless face,
And crafty hands that plot and plan ;
Such is the man, who seeks a place,
Nor deems the place should seek the man—
Fretting the days, with restless schemes,
Haunting the nights, with artful dreams.

Alas! the few, who learn to live.
To find a place, a man should spare
His pains, and all his labor give
To fit himself for something rare.
So shall he hold the world in hand,
A crown, or crust, at his command.

'Tis not the place that makes the man ;
But he all place doth worthy make,
Whose truthful thought moves in the van,
Of such as with all falsehood break.
His upward path is free from clouds ;
Free from the whims of changeful crowds.

For passing praise let fools contend ;
Since crowds unmake, what crowds have made !
Oft morn's huzzas in hisses end,
Ere yet, swift day in twilight fade !
Far better than such fickle fame,
'Twere to deserve a noble name.

THE HUNTER. 10

'Twas in life's sweet, early morn,
When the dew was on the grass,
And the bloom was on the thorn,
I saw a hunter pass.

His keen dogs bounding before—
Hope, Ambition, Courage, Pride—
Scent the valley o'er and o'er,
Then sniff the mountain side.

Faint and far, he hears the sound,
Of the wild and heated chase;
And his steps fly o'er the ground
Annihilating space!

Thro' wide fields of growing corn,
Open plains and tangled bogs,
With clear voice, and sounding horn,
He urges on his dogs.

All intent upon the game—
Fame, Position, Wealth and Power—
Hotly he doth track a name,
The magic of an hour.

But, ere noon is barely past,
Sorely crossed by rocks and logs,
Strength and courage ebbing fast,
Lo! he calls off his dogs.

Smitten by the mid-day heat,
Done the chase, he homeward steals,
Dragging more and more his feet,
His dogs all at his heels!

CYNICISM.

OF rubbish cast in human mould,
That paragon in his own eyes,
Of other's faults, alone, is bold,
Whom gods and men alike despise.

All real folks, so conscious are
Of imperfections of their own,
They have no eye for flaws, that mar
A fellow man, whose fault is known.

Just this, it is, my cynic friend,
The difference makes, 'twixt you and me ;
My fault like flax to smoke doth tend,
While yours is alcohol, you see !

ALCHEMY.

THEY dream'd not in vain, the sages of old,
Of a magical word of meaning profound,
Or a wonderful stone of musical sound,
Whose touch would transmute base metals to gold.

For love is the thing of substance divine,
That witches the world with a powerful spell,
And quick, as the light, its message will tell;
Its touch of the veins is sweeter than wine!

The shop-girl it turns to a fairy, young queen,
Ennobles the boy on the farm to a king.
The home-spun affair and lowliest thing,
It thrones in splendors, that eye hath not seen!

The full udder'd kine, that stand in the lane,
From clover just brought in sweet, early May,
Enchanting will seem, at the close of the day,
When a-courting doth come the gallant, young swain.

The cottage threshold with timbers so clean,
Resounding to steps of beautiful feet,
So charms the proud lord of an opulent street,
His Indian rugs seem common and mean!

Such wonders are wrought by the magic of love!

It changes harsh sounds to a dulcet refrain,

And coarse, earthen dolls to fine porcelain;

E'en rags to a robe, a hawk to a dove!

Its magic doth yield the world half its glory!

With angels it fills our barren, earth skies;

Child prodigies makes in parents' fond eyes,

And every day life, a passionate story!

ONLY LOVE IS GREAT.

To sit on thrones and ride in state,
Thro' crowded streets, whose storms of praise
The earth doth rock, the sea dismays,
Is what the world calls great.

But so to live for other's good,
That one may rear in hearts a throne,
By helpful work and brotherhood,
That is to heaven only known—
To me, it seems most clearly shown,
That only love is great.

To have a name allied to fate,
Whose accents thrill the peopled globe,
That kneeling begs to touch its robe,
Is what the world calls great.

But so to fill one's lowly lot,
With gentle words and deeds divine,
As to transform the humble cot,
For weary hearts into a shrine—
To me, it seems a thought sublime,
That only love is great.

To roll in wealth, whose gusts inflate
The plumes of pride, and fashion make,
Where courtly feet the stars awake,
Is what the world calls great.

But so to help some sinking soul
His head to keep above the wave,
When storms arise and tempests roll,
As life to cheer and hope to save—
To me, it seems, athwart the grave,
That only love is great.

Honor and wealth but foster hate.
Not what we have, but what we are,
Makes of our life a shining star.
This, this is only great !
The deeds of love, like costly gems,
The sky of life with stars bestud ;
Kind words outrank earth's diadems,
And pretty ways, e'en princely blood—
The thought sweeps on a rising flood,
That only love is great.

HELP.

A SUDDEN cry broke on the night!
A plaintive cry, that chill'd my blood,
As if, into the roaring flood,
Some one had fallen. With the fright,
The bell struck two, that solemn hour,
And echo'd from the old church tower;
"Help, help."

A frightful dream some mind had cross'd,
As tempests wild rush o'er the seas;
Then, all was hush'd. Not e'en a breeze
From out the wood a leaflet toss'd.
Still, far and near, and low and high,
Thro' all my soul, I heard the cry;
"Help, help!"

A widow poor, in want of bread,
Her children sick, ill-dress'd and cold,
Remembers still the days of old,
And kneeling low, beside their bed,
She wildly grasps affliction's rod,
And sobbing prays to man and God;
"Help, help!"

A struggling soul, of ill the slave,
Who has grown sick of evil ways,
As he recalls the better days,
Or stoops to mark the opening grave,
To Him, who notes the sparrow's fall,
Fain lifts on high the pleading call;
"Help, help!"

A student's lamp is burning low,
The morning hour comes on apace,
And still, he seeks to find some trace
Of God's footsteps, so very slow!
His burning brain, with anxious haste,
Cries out for pain, o'er such a waste;
"Help, help!"

Thus, thro' the world, by night and day,
One cry I hear, from youth and age,
From rich and poor, from serf and sage,
Filling the lands with mournful lay,
Whose tearful notes find fitting word,
In the sad cry, so often heard;
"Help, help!"

O brothers, help! Had I the power,
To gather up o'er all the earth,
From life's distress and moral dearth,
Some mighty word, I'd voice this hour,
And make man feel, henceforth to live,
His only thought should be to give
Help, help!

THE THRENODY OF LIFE.

OH! how can the spirit that is thoughtful be light?
Each moment some dear one is buried from sight.
The homes of our brothers are sleepless with pain;
Their bosoms are breaking with grief for the slain.

See! they faint by the way, overburden'd with life—
The brave, who like heroes encounter the strife,
As the coward who seeks for repose in his flight;
Consum'd by their sorrows, they vanish from sight.

We stand on the shore of an ocean of pain,
That rocks with the surges, that dash from the main,
Making music of thunder, above the gray stone
Where the Goddess of Sorrow hath builded her throne!

Oh! brief is man's day; long enough for his load,
Whose trials, severe, urge him on like a goad.
Like the lightning's swift bolt, from the fist of the storm,
He speeds through the earth a tear-distilling form.

From the cradle anon, all the way to the grave,
Huge billows dash over him, wave upon wave.
The sad undertones of the loud sobbing sea,
And man's mournful cry, are both set to one key.

From a world of surprise, that startles us dumb,
In the robings of darkness atrail do we come,
To a world of distresses and pains at our birth,
With a chorus of cries usher'd into the earth !

E'en childhood hath tears thick as dew-drops of morn,
Its path hedg'd with trials that wound like a thorn ;
The rainbow of hope spanning youth with delight,
Has a background of storms that is black as the night.

The love that our natures so wildly pursue,
But a glance of whose eye doth our world here renew,
While promising joys, is o'erburden'd with fears,
And the day it is enter'd, ends often in tears.

The friend and the fortune, so highly we prize,
Alike with the want of them, darken our skies.
Man to trouble is born, that doth always increase,
And like the sad sea, he is never at peace.

Before us, what peoples endur'd the same lot ;
The anguish they suffer'd, so soon is forgot !
The loads we are bearing, the races have borne ;
And where we are lonesome, they oft were forlorn !

Our dreams that are failing, long ages have fail'd ;
The seas we are sailing, oft others have sail'd.
They were wet by the waves that now dampen our feet,
And soon o'er us all in great billows shall beat.

Thus, backward, the journey of man we must trace,
Thro' cycles, yet nameless, to some creeping race ;
So long has man groan'd, oppress'd by his load,
Oh ! picture the length of this sad peopled road.

The fears, that oft startle the babe in its sleep,
Had elsewhere their rising, up ages so steep,
The red torrent broad fissures of pedigree leaps,
Then foaming and fretting runs on to the deeps.

To our miseries, those of our fathers we add.
The race is a unit. The child may be sad
O'er griefs, that have burden'd the heart of its mother,
And no one is free from some pang of another.

Thus ever man's touch is more sensitive grown ;
We reap our own fields, and what others have sown,
'Till sheaves of adversity cover the ground,
And the garnerers of life all with sorrows abound.

The woe of the world o'ershadows the land,
As the race moves along, to the wave beaten strand,
Where farewells are spoken with tear bedimm'd eyes,
In sorrowing circles whose sobs fill the skies !

While the sigh and the tear, and the hearse and the grave,
Thus follow each other, as wave upon wave,
Soon quenching earth's joys in eternity's night,
Oh ! how can the spirit that is thoughtful be light ?

OUR NORTHERN WINTERS.

OUR Northern winters are not all unlovely ;
What tho' they come with stern and blustering visage,
To blushing flower, to tuneful bird and brook,
Their discipline well may be harsh ; to man,
God's heir, they have a grander ministry.

Perchance, as wearied, fretted and impair'd
By the wild wanderings of his summer way,
They do compel him, like a truant scholar,
To hasten home, and yield his nature up
To sweet influences, that soothe and bless.

Besides, our winters, still, are full of joy ;
Of meadows white with snow, of merry bells,
Of fireside joys, of evenings spent at home,
And sweet companionship of books, that make
Of Nature's death, man's bridal holiday !

Of Nature's death ? The words we fain recall !
For morn by morn, on every window pane,
We see a garden of the rarest ferns,
And choicest flowers ; old castles with rock turrets,
And crystal towers with diamond dangling vines.

Thence, thro' the farther woodlands, stand tall pines,
Like ranks of soldiers, every one of whom
Has battles won and wears his stars; tall grass,
Whose sun-tipp'd spears are sway'd with gentlest breeze,
Where pasture wide the Winter's fleecy flocks.

And over all, the gardens of the sky
Extend, where th' daisies of the angels bloom!
Who has not walked among them, when the ground
Was robed in snow, and the air was full of frost,
Has ne'er yet seen the glory of Creation!

Such change man needs from all his fever'd labors;
That in a climate grateful to the mind,
He may new-plant and dress life's richest garden;
Inhale the fragrance of its blossoming thoughts,
And from each fountain drink in mental health.

Give to the winds thy thoughts of sunny skies!
With cheerful meekness and sweet charity,
Learn thou life's latest, greatest, simplest lesson—
Winter outside is not winter within!
Here, if at all, eternal summer find.

Who e'er thou art, so come unto life's feast,
And thou shalt find, e'en winter's rugged fare,
The wholesome nurture of a hungry soul!
Thus, calm'd, compos'd, with never failing strength,
Rising, go in to thy eternal banquet.

ENCHANTMENT.

I SAW a young man in life's early morn,
His footsteps, as light as dew on the corn.
A far away look he wore in his eye,
Atint with the mists of an Orient sky.
Bright hopes broke in smiles, that play'd on his lips
Like suns round the oar, that swift water dips.
The dreams of his youth so ravish'd his soul,
He viewed with impatience the path to his goal.

A deep mid the hills, embower'd with wood,
His future sublime, like a temple there stood ;
Its nave, overcast with arches of snow,
Shot up from the pavements of marble below ;
And columns, whose crowns the sky-pillars press'd,
Of alabaster carved, that roses caress'd
With love crimson'd cheeks ; all one could desire,
In splendor confess'd, from basement to spire.

Tall fountains competed with summer's warm rain,
Thro' trees that awoke the minster's refrain ;
And flowers, so sweet, there shed such perfume,
Fair women might well with envy consume :
So charming was life, from where the youth stood,
That smooth seem'd the path to his earthly good—
Whose easy ascent led upward to fame,
The worthies all found encompass'd with flame !

To that temple throng'd, as boundless as air,
By night and by day, the brave and the fair ;
Such men, as were all the heroes of right,
And women, whose robes were pure as the light ;
The children of love from homes so divine,
Their lowest impulse the virtues refine ;
Thus, each common thing, in fancy did seem
To wear the splendor and charm of a dream.

The vision now shifts to life's afternoon,
The weakness of age comes only too soon ;
He leans, an old man, on his trusted cane,
All bending with years, like ripening grain.
And yet, he remains as sunny and bright,
As in the fresh hours of life's morning light ;
His heart still as full of the dews of his youth,
And his mind ever young for love of the truth.

O, pity the man, when youth is far fled,
Who has but regret with remembrance to wed !
While sadly he leans on the broken down wall
Of a temple, that fast to ruins doth fall ;
Whose wreck the shy crows, all eye from the shore,
As checking their flight they croak, "Never more !"
So joyless is life, as sad as a moan,
When once the sweet soul of enchantment is flown !

Not thus with the man, who lives to aspire ;
Nor hope doth depart, nor love doth expire.
Tho' the fire of his youth must fade from the eye,
The rose-flush of morn will stay in his sky.

Then, let the years fly with each passing breath,
Their silences deep, as the shadow of death ;
Since all, that we prize as richer than gold,
Survives in the heart that never grows old.

O ye, that would feel immortal, forsooth !
Be true to your dreams of Heaven and youth.
Since life is replenish'd from garner so grown,
The harvest of age in youth must be sown.
We carry within, the treasures we laud,
Whatever we reap in meadows abroad ;
The charm we project, from out our own vision,
That makes of all life a fadeless elysian.

THE LITTLE NEWSBOY.

IN a great and growing town,
Trudg'd a child with crippled feet,
Hardly from his baby gown,
Selling papers on the street.

All at once, a piercing cry
Burst upon the crowd afar;
A mad horse, in rushing by
Hurl'd the child beneath a car.

'Twas his voice the mother heard!
And she flew with terror wild,
Too appall'd to speak a word,
When she reach'd her mangled child.

But the boy, with dying breath,
Whisper'd; "Mother, I sold four—
Please, don't cry;" and then in death,
Closed his lips forever more!

Noble lad! his latest thought
Was about his toiling mother;
Martyr-like, he bravely fought
Unto death, to help another.

What tho' poor, the crippled boy
Show'd himself of royal mould ;
His young life, unus'd to joy,
Still was rich as shining gold.

Thus a king is often born,
To a brief and servile life ;
Crush'd to death, unknown, forlorn,
In some hard, ignoble strife !

Down among the ragged crowd,
Heroes move along the street,
With a voice that, never loud,
Charms the more, because so sweet.

Their fresh words, into our veins,
The new blood of battles pour ;
Stirring us, like martial strains,
That resound from shore to shore.

OUR ANGELS.

GOD maketh his angels of the flames of white fire!
But man, a mite less than his wonderful sire,
Doth wing his creations, with thoughts that aspire.

'Tis out of ourselves, that our heavens are grown,
And habits of virtue our angels still are ;
While each gentle grace, that use maketh our own,
Attendeth our lives like a guardian star !

Who first in the path of some duty endures,
Betimes, for himself, he its angel secures—
An influence holy, enchanting his days,
And wooing him sweetly from dangerous ways.

How vast is the sky that doth span us afar ;
And vast is the sun in his gold, gleaming car ;
But vaster man's world than the sweep of a star !

And over it all, with a breadth still unknown,
The uses we foster, that render us strong ;
And name as its angels, our habits full grown,
That shield all our steps from the pitfalls of wrong.

Thus ever attended by legions of light,
A man durst defy all the armies of night.
Tho' feeble his steps, in God's strength he doth share,
Where else he had hung on the edge of despair.

SEPARATION.

THE evening breeze from off the bay,
Soft fans the brow of closing day.

The summer night,
So great and bright,
From all the height,
Sheds down its light ;

But what, to me, the summer eve,
While for my absent ones I grieve.

The fair, new moon glides down the sky ;
A snowy cloud is floating by.

The whole earth seems
A gem, that teems
With flashing beams,
To light my dreams.

But what, to me, is each bright sphere,
Since my beloved are not here.

Starlight now weds the roses' scent,
The lily breathes in wonderment !

And freshest bloom,
'Mid gathering gloom,
In sweet perfume,
Steals thro' my room.

But what, to me, is star or flower,
Afar from home this lonely hour.

Up thro' my open window stealing,
There comes the hum of laughter pealing.

The crowd goes by,
The night runs high,
The swift hours vie
To make life fly.

But dull the mirth, and cloy'd the life,
That is not shared with child and wife.

SEX.

STRANGERS, till the passing word
Their true hearts with love has stirr'd,
When at once their strangeness ends ;
In an hour, they two are friends,
That could hardly dearer be,
Loving thro' eternity.

What were juices of the vine,
To a nectar so divine?
Oozing from the fount of bliss,
Sex imparting to a kiss,
Whose flame-kindled drops appear,
Rich as vintage of a year!

Thus, e'en beauty, fragrance, mirth,
All the things most sweet on earth—
Songs that fill us with surprise,
Flower tints of paradise,
By ways delicate, complex,
Have their origin in sex.

THE ETERNAL WONDER.

I HAVE heard it in the forest,
Thro' the branches gray and bare,
And in giant pines primeval,
Toying with their fronded hair,
Phantom music in the air.

I have heard it in the stillness
Of the soft and dewy night,
When thro' starry space, were sounding
Crystal bells of amber light,
O'er sky-floods of flaming white!

I have heard it in the ocean,
Chanting low the seaman's dirge;
And in mighty deeps upgather'd,
When the breakers roll and surge,
Smiting commerce with a scourge.

I have heard it in the brooklet,
Its brief ballads sweetly singing
To the measure of forever;
When in ivied towers swinging,
Vesper bells were softly ringing.

I have heard it in the conflict,
Sweeter than a baby's prattle;
When its silence spoke in thunder,
Far above the din and rattle,
Of a nation great in battle!

I have heard it in the conscience,
When there spoke the solemn *ought*,
That proclaims the Judge eternal,
Like a woven, magic thought,
Into human nature wrought.

I have heard it in the sunshine,
Of a golden, summer day,
When its kiss lay on the pastures,
Soft as mist of silver spray,
Sweet as scent of clover hay.

I have heard it at life's portals,
When upon a sea of danger,
From a shore unknown arriving
As the Christ-child in the manger,
Late there came a baby stranger.

I have heard it in death's chamber,
When the last farewells were spoken;
In such after-thoughts resounding,
As beseeem'd the precious token,
Of a promise never broken!

Everywhere, I hear its going,
O'er the land and in the sea ;
Wind of faith, of hope and duty ;
Source of life's great mystery,
To which worship bends the knee !

All above our workday being,
Whelm'd with facts like hail and sleet,
Bend its skies of epic beauty,
Whose afflatus, strange and sweet,
Makes existence all complete.

'Tis a world that ne'er decreases,
But expands with what we know.
As the skirts of light are widen'd,
The outskirts of darkness grow
Whence the streams of mystery flow.

Here tired souls may find a covert
From life's beaten, dusty street ;
'Neath the wings of the Almighty,
Shelter'd from the summer heat,
Where to lave their weary feet.

Nameless ! yet, with many titles,
The great Father of us all,
Whose strong hand alike in mercy,
Doth upbear the pond'rous ball,
And protect the sparrow's fall !

Lord, Jehovah, Law and Essence !
Such the names He passeth under ;
But to me, none have such meaning,
Heard in silence or in thunder,
As hath The Eternal Wonder !

NOTES.

1, PAGE 21.

Many efforts have been made, to improve upon the divine completeness of the human life Christ lived ; but the additions always have been found, as they always will be, to mar the perfect whole.

2, PAGE 94.

Walt Whitman, in one of his rustic poems that has the rhythm of the pasture fields in its lines, sings over sweetly of the brute in comparison with man.

3, PAGE 100.

Infidelity is forced to recognize The Universal, as starting point, in accounting for this system of things ; which carries with it the premises that Christian logic desires.

4, PAGE 162.

It is questionable, if the old time slavers that trafficed in human beings, made as many slaves, as do the ships of to-day that carry rum, and these, incalculably more degraded.

5, PAGE 203.

Dr. Stuckenberg, writing from Berlin to the *Homiletic Monthly*, deploras the fact that the German Pulpit is bound to the preaching of dogmatic theology, instead of the practical gospel as in America. To this, he attributes largely, the loss of its hold on the masses. The same condition of things, as to preaching, existed in this country before the time of Henry Ward Beecher. Because of enormous prestige, growing with all the years, it was a greater thing to achieve the freedom of the spoken word than of the written word. But only, in the same way the words of Christ are to be taken ; "and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto Father."

6, PAGE 215.

I believe with John Robinson of the Mayflower, that from time to time, more light shall break on the Word of God, and, that every discord in our Christian Civilization to-day, is evidence, just there, of a failure properly to render the Universal Harmony of the Gospel.

7, PAGE 224.

It has been justly said, that among the dark and gloomy pines of Chancellorsville was enacted a tragedy, more worthy to live in epic verse than the famous charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava. Stonewall Jackson had completely surprised Howard's Eleventh Corps, and was driving it in confusion toward the centre of our line. 20,000 Confederates were in hot pursuit. Five batteries and 300 cavalry, not more than 600 men all told, to make a stand against such enormous odds: besides, the guns stood pointing everyway. Suddenly General Pleasanton rode up, and above the din arose his voice; "Align those pieces!" It was the work of many minutes, and Jackson was just upon them. Oh, for ten minutes time! How shall he get it? There sat Major Keenan, with his 300 horsemen. The General said quickly to him, "Major you must charge into those woods with your men and hold the enemy in check until I get those guns in position. You must do it at all cost," Keenan said; "That is the same as saying, 'you must be killed'" but added with a smile, "General I will do it."

8, PAGE 247.

It is said, that in the heat of sultry noon, the stars of dawn can be seen reflected in the bottom of a deep well.

9, PAGE 257.

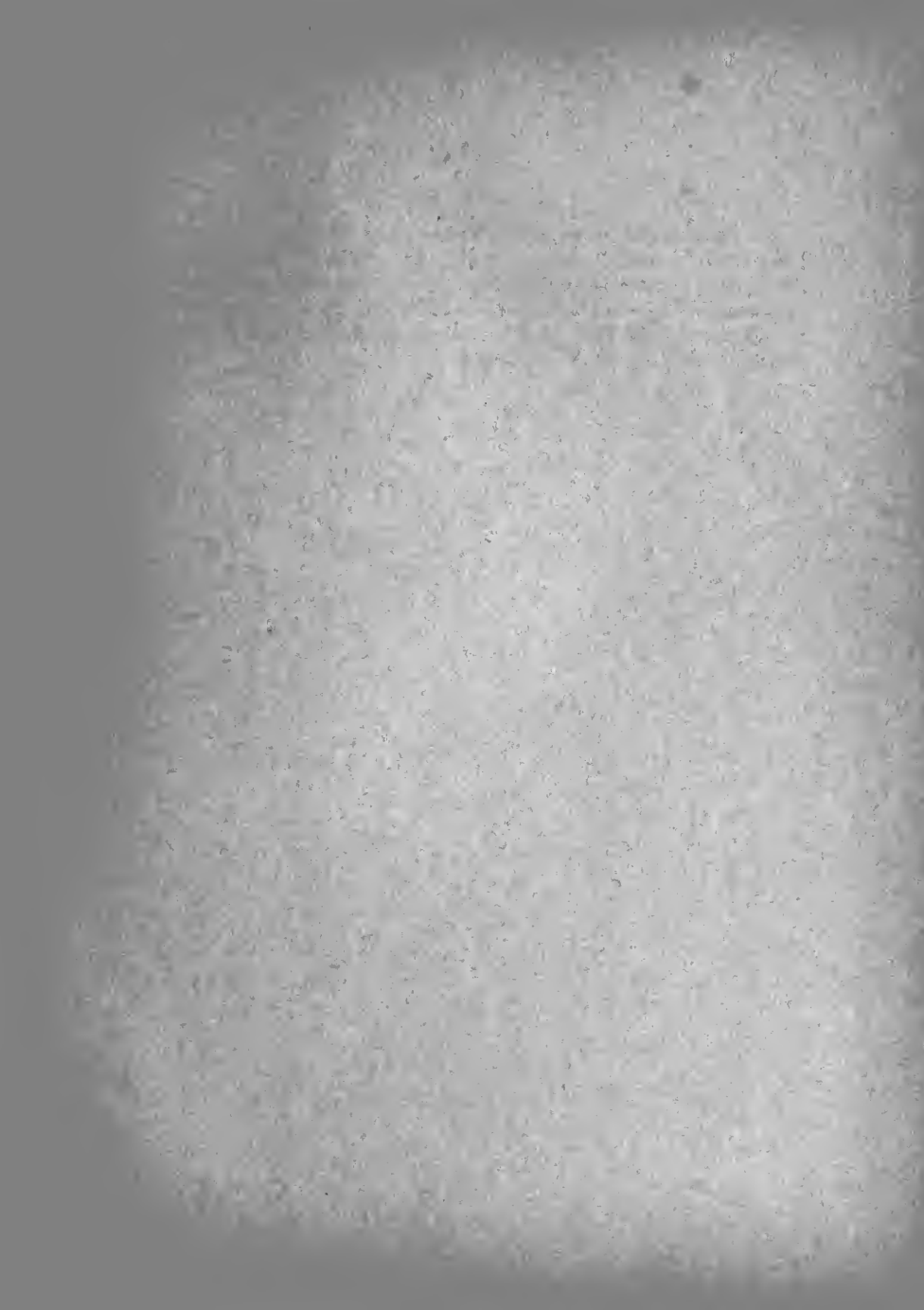
In the phantasy of Metempsychosis, I have called into service the theory of pre-existence to account for some of the characteristic animalisms among men.

10, PAGE 261.

In the contact of lower orders with higher orders, miracles are always happening. To say, that "Miracles do not happen," is to assume, that there are no higher orders of intelligences than man.

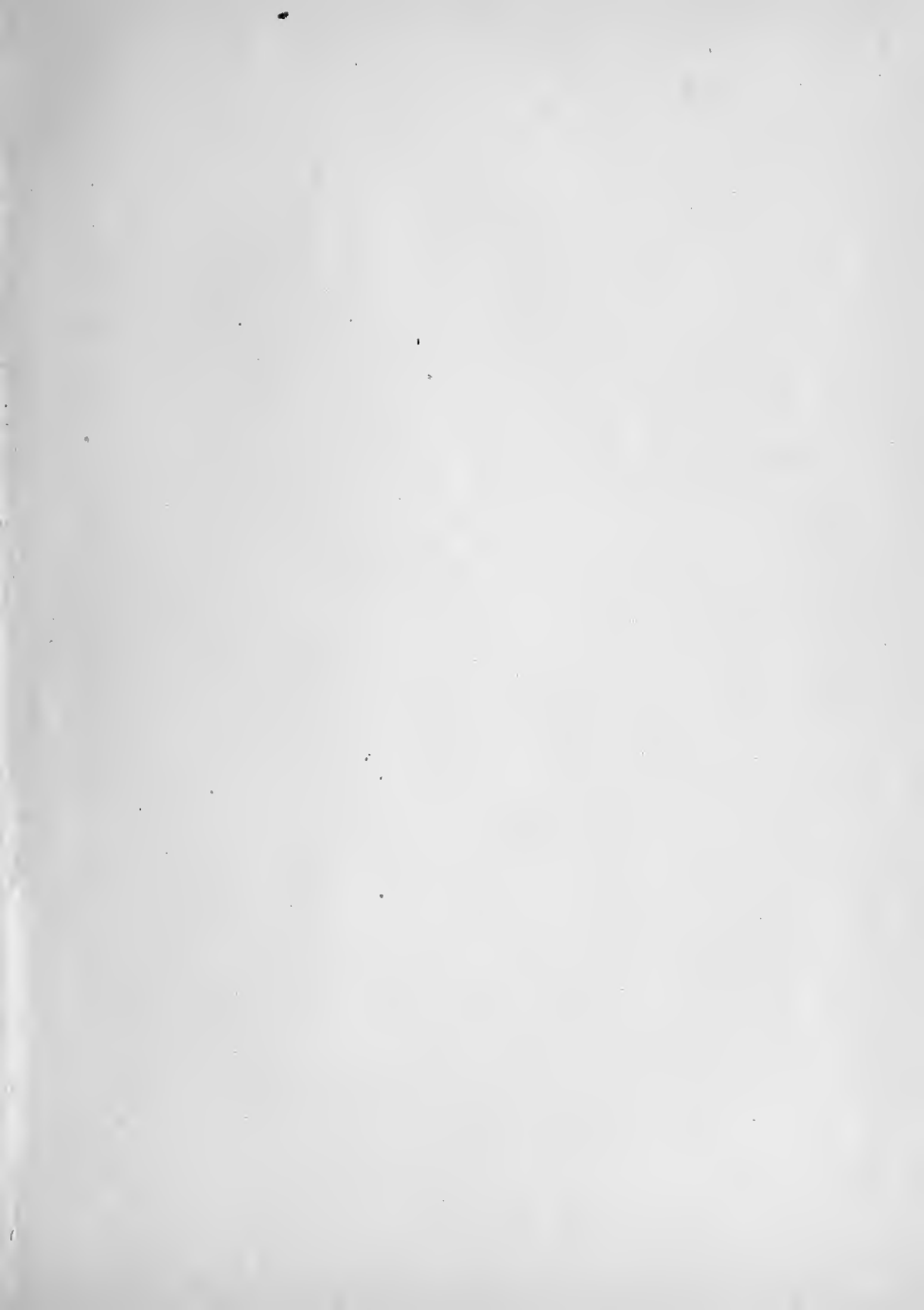
11, PAGE 282.

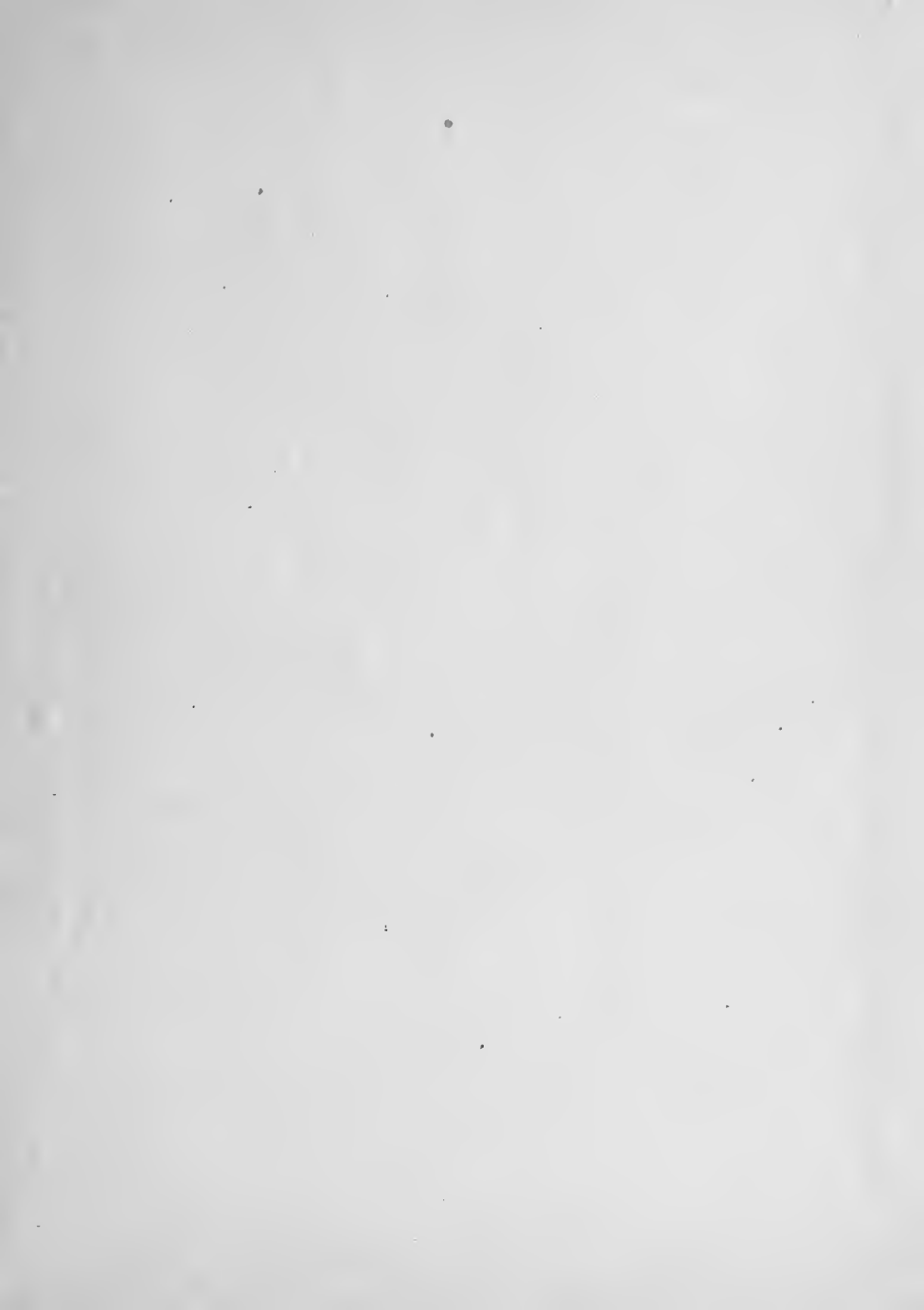
One night in the office of Dr. Tunnicliff of Jackson, Mich., where some of the representative men of the city were in the habit of spending a social evening; on one occasion, when a prominent politician was the topic of conversation; Hon. Austin Blair, Michigan's great War Governor, remarked that he was nearing that time of life when a man begins to think of calling off his dogs.











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